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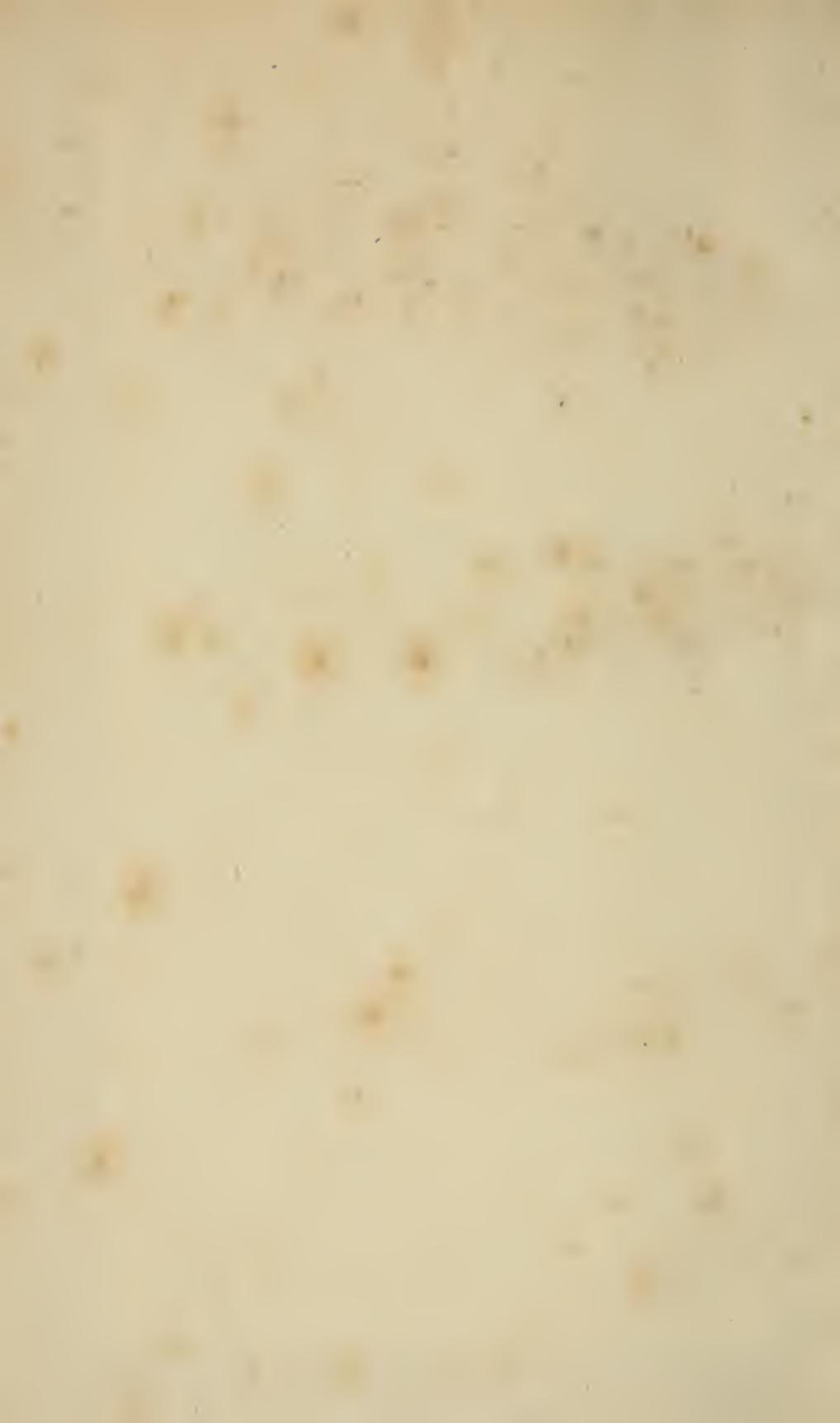
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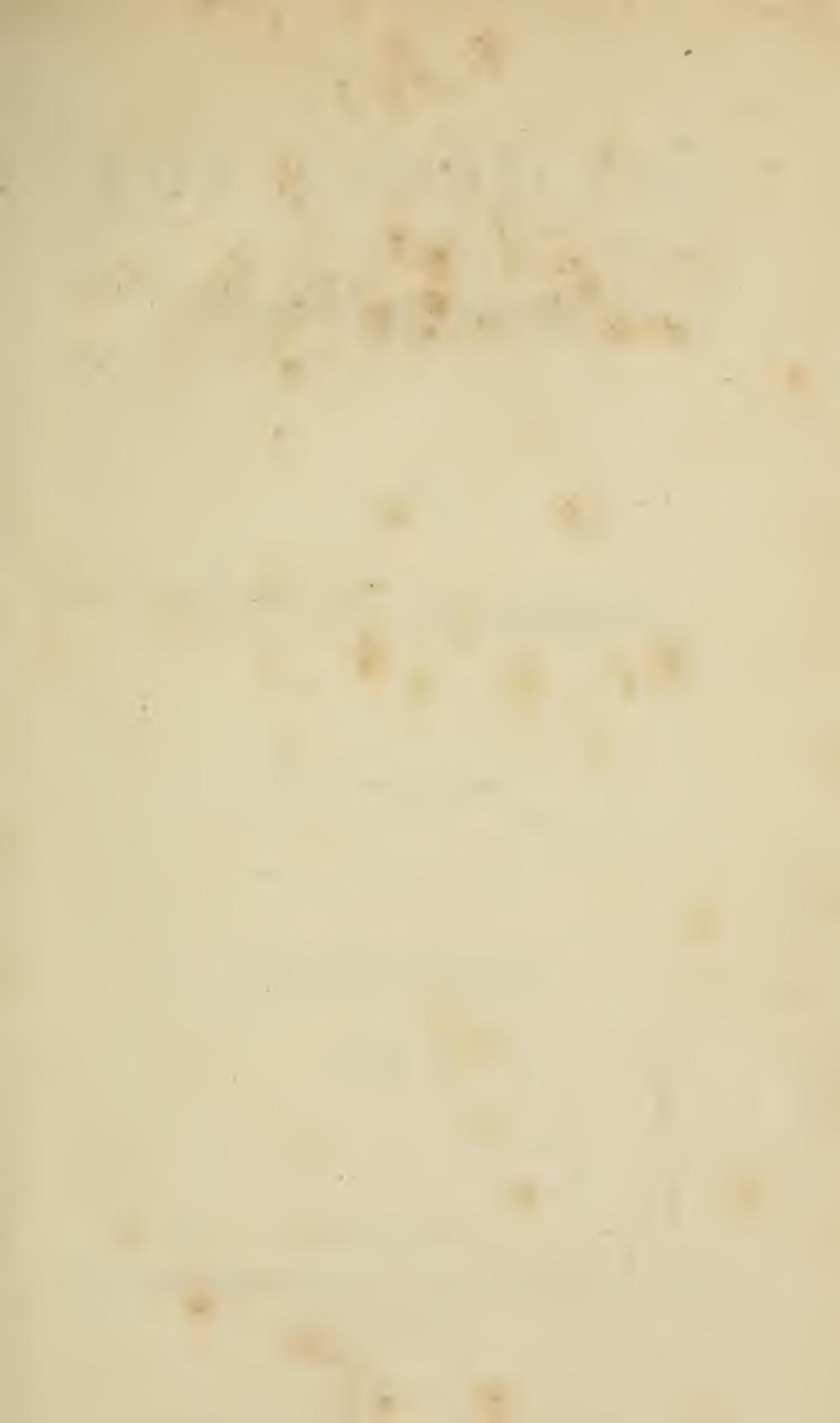
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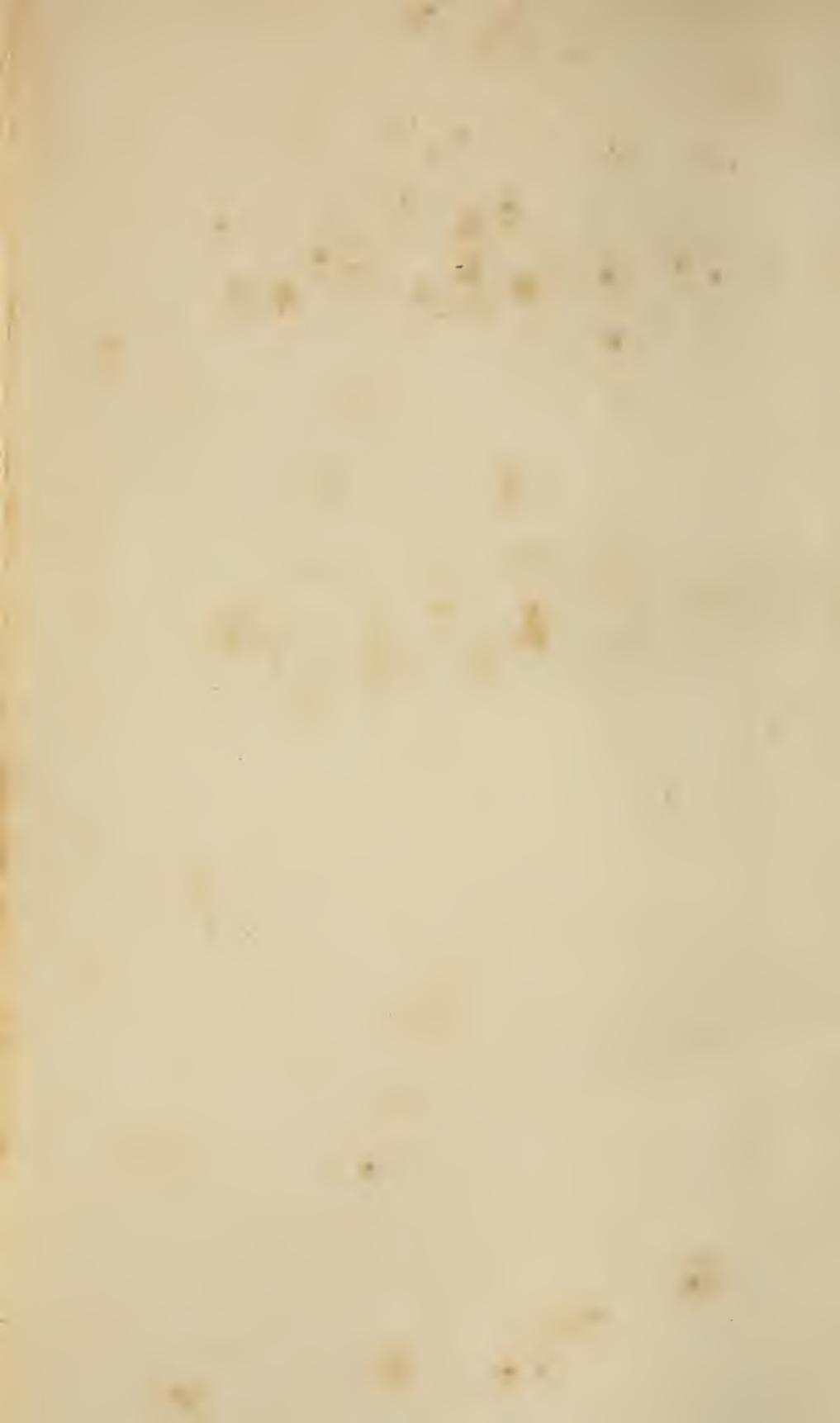
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THE PARRICIDE.

A DOMESTIC ROMANCE.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "MISERRIMUS."

"Homo homini lupus."

ERASMUS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

L O N D O N.

THOMAS HOOKHAM, OLD BOND-STREET.

MDCCCXXXVI.

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THE PARRICIDE.

THE INTRODUCTION.

IN the hope of benefiting some few of my fellow men, and of thereby making a slight atonement for my crimes, I record the events of a long life of self indulgence, anarchy, passion, and truculence, of which every minute has been a tempest, and every thought a wound. *Now*, the ashes of my heart are entombed in my breast, as in a sepulchre of ice ; yet once, that heart was formed of fire, and burnt, and raged until it perished, self-consumed.

But, I remember that, in the days when I formed a portion of the world, there existed a sect, who denied the utility of the exposition of moral de-

formity. Perhaps, in a few instances, the doctrine of these timid philosophers may not be wholly wrong; still, I cannot think that it is generally right. There may be some natures, so utterly depraved, weak, and servile, that, the mere perusal of a crime, however much it may be reprobated by the narrator, and avenged upon the perpetrator, shall yet awaken in them a desire to imitate it. But, guilty and defective as are all the shadows of this fleeting and mortal pageant, few are they who possess this extent of folly and vice. It may almost be considered a canon that the majority of men will ever be intimidated, and improved by an accurate picture of the awful retribution, which the unbridled indulgence of the passions never fails to inflict upon the self-abandoned.

We are all of us prone to refer to the actions of the ancients, for admiration, and for precedent; but, the opponents of the belief I entertain in the sincerity, and contrition of my heart, have forgotten, or disregarded, one of the most striking examples they have bequeathed to us.

The strong disposition to pourtray the most powerful emotions, and the darkest atrocities, formed a principal feature in their character. *Love*, subsequently, so common a theme, among the nations of the West, rarely constituted any portion of the means of interest and excitement, which the authors of the classic era adopted. *Terror*, terror, in its most powerful, and hideous forms, was their principal, and almost, their sole agent; for, *compassion*, the other affection to which their compositions were addressed, was usually but its consequence: they first caused their audience to tremble; and then, to pity.

This, is the form which the dramatic productions of the ancients generally assumed; but, if we turn from them, to their traditional history, equally terrible scenes are presented to us. Eteocles and Polynices, Atreus and Thyestes; Oedipus, Laius, Jocasta; Mezentius and Procustes, are charmed names, the very sight or sound of which, almost create a thrill of fear. Yet, the Athenians, instead of being indurated by these gloomy objects of their fond considera-

tion, were not only a wise and great, but, a singularly *humane* people. Why then, should we deem themes of terror, and retribution, calculated to produce an injurious impression upon the youthful, and the ductile? for I cannot believe, that any will suppose that the *mature* are likely to be perniciously influenced by them. Generally, but too disposed to imitate the past, why should we reject its example, in this striking particular alone?

Little however, need I seek to justify my motives! Above, and below, both calumny, and malignity, too reckless to regard them, and too lost to be harmed by them, without fear, and without scathe, I might now indulge my own inclinations, even were they most flagitious. Let therefore, my adversary persist in his condemnation of my creed; little need I now heed whether his censures arise in the strength of his virulence, or, in the weakness of his comprehension, whether they be fictitious, or sincere. I shall still believe that, as the study, and improvement of our physical being are advanced by a

dissemination of the knowledge of its most rare, and remarkable diseases, so, an accurate record of the morbid phases, and delusions of a mind singularly and eminently disordered, must ever be instructive, and serviceable, to all who have sufficient intelligence, and benevolence to seek to penetrate the obscurity of that sad and solemn mystery, the human heart ; and to avail themselves of every gleam of discovery, in promoting the general elevation, dignity, and welfare of their kind.

Yes ; I am myself alone : no sorrow is equal to my sorrow, no guilt is equal to my guilt. I can divulge to the ear of man, a tissue of thoughts and deeds, that will impress, and intimidate the most insensible ; thoughts of such startling rarity, that even the moment of their disclosure, shall be to him as an epoch in his subsequent life. Come then, to my banquet, ye, who hesitating between virtue, and vice, require some sudden, and powerful incentive, some fearful and awful example of divine retribution, to determine you to a choice ; ye, hardened crimi-

nals, who have so long indulged, in impunity, all the wayward, selfish impulses of your hearts, that, ye believe yourselves exempt from all liability to punishment, and consequently, require to be taught the fate that is ultimately, and inevitably, adjudged to you, unless ye speedily abandon, in sincerity, and contrition, in spirit, as well as in deed, the evil of your ways: ye, too, negative beings, who hang, like Mahomet's coffin, between earth and heaven, yet possess neither the vices of the one, nor the virtues of the other, attend, and ye, shall learn that heaven requires *action* at your hands; and ye, moral ghouls who love to haunt the dark, and awful sepulchres of the mind, and feast on its remains, come hither! and I will gorge you on rotteness, and corruption.

Come one; come all. Not a sinner but shall receive a lesson, not an honest man but shall meet a confirmation of his faith. I think I see above me, an obscure, mysterious, endless roof of sublimely lofty, and stupendous arches, beneath which a nation might assemble; from

column to column, are suspended the habiliments of the grave ; and along the dank, and discolored floor, extend a triple interminable line of black, colossal, visionary tables, that gradually melt from the eye, until finally lost in the grey, and heavy vapours of the distance. Take then, your seats, my bidden guests, at this ample, and hospitable board : and now, like another Timon, *I* will uncover, and *you* shall lap : in the plenitude of my sorrow, and my bitterness, of my remorse for the past, and apprehension of the future, I could supply a repast for all the nations of the earth !

Before, however, I commence the narrative of the incidents of my life, I must devote some prefatory thoughts to the consideration of the characters of both my sire and myself, and of those pursuits, occupations, and circumstances, which, I believe, to have been most influential in promoting, and fostering the worst features of my unhappy nature.

My father, and in that one word is comprised for me, every horror which the human mind

can endure, was one of those characters that cannot be entirely pourtrayed. It were comparatively easy to say that which he was not; but impossible to express that which he was. He was not violent; he seemed, too, neither fierce, nor cruel; nor a profligate, nor a gamester, nor a drunkard; he was not oppressive to his dependents, or a grasping, or avaricious landholder, though it was asserted that he did not spend a tithe of his large revenue; he was not generous, he was not high-minded; he was not affectionate; he was not benevolent, charitable, compassionate, or devout. In brief, he had apparently neither positive virtue, nor positive vice: and I know but two epithets that will convey any accurate idea of his real character; he was eminently *selfish*, and *insensible*.

Yet, such as he was, I can remember the time when I loved him fondly. I never recur to these affections of my childhood, and early youth, but with an anguish inconceivable; for the retrospection makes me conscious that I

was born with the seeds of good within me. What then, was the cause of their extirpation, and of the entire predominance of their antagonistic principles ? A *parent's neglect*, and my own *morbid sensibility*, and *intense egotism*. In this answer, is contained the moral of my life of sorrow, desolation, and atrocity.

The one quality caused me to feel with a torturing acuteness every contrariety ; the other, deprived me of the power of impartially investigating the nature of my wrongs. Every word, every look, every gesture that would admit the possibility of misinterpretation, infused anguish, and bitterness into my soul. And each of these wounds, of which the causes were, frequently, either ideal, or trivial, was indelible. But, the agony which an intentional gibe, or contumely, occasioned me, is ineffable ! Even, after a lapse of years, I could not mentally recur to the hour of its infliction, without a shudder of sympathy, and that sickness of the heart, and momentary prostration of the physical being, which the morbidly sensitive can alone experience, or

understand. But while the pang of the first impression was on me, in its full recency, and strength, it haunted me with an irresistible power, by night, and by day; even in my very sleep, I possessed a gloomy, and confused consciousness of being under the influence of some all-absorbing calamity: and, when I awoke, it was but to find my too active, and tenacious mind spring like a beast of prey upon its fatally attractive theme, and pertinaciously review, and reconsider it, under all the forms, and aspects, it had already endlessly presented.

Thus darkly, and doggedly used I to brood over my injuries, whether real or fancied. Never did it enter into my imagination, to endeavour to place myself in the situation of my adversary, and attempt to ascertain whether I might not have provoked the wrong I had sustained. That golden precept, which may almost be said to comprise the entire code of morality, *Do, as you would be done by*, never even obtained a thought from me: I had seen, and read the words, but they conveyed to my

brain no intelligible image; they were sounds, but the sense they should have represented, was not perceptible to one whose every thought was addressed to *self*.

Yes; I lived in a world the circumference of which was described by the bones of my own frame; within its narrow limits was my mind immutably concentrated, and without it, it never wandered. Yet, how many of the self-satisfied of this world, pseudo moralists, and philanthropists, are in this predicament! Frequenters of churches, scrupulous observers of religious ordinations, fastidious respecters of social regulations, and prejudices, they do not suspect that they may be indulging a merely selfish impulse; that timidity may *not* be devotion; and that a fear of the world's reproof, and a craving for its approbation, may exist in the breast which does *not* love its neighbour as well as itself. May this intimation arouse them to a self-misgiving, and instigate them to that search within their hearts, which can alone inform them, whether they really possess the righteousness they so pharisaically claim!

Even while I am addressing this admonition to others, the elements of strife are at work within me. Oromazes!—Arimanius!—Principles of good, and evil! Gods of my aversion, and idolatry, of my aspirations, and desertion! Alternate creatures, and rulers of my destiny! why do you thus fatally oppress the unfortunate, who, whether the lord, or slave, of one, is equally certain to be the victim of the unmitigable rancour of both? Why have ye selected this sorry, fragile frame for the constant arena of your deadliest combats? Why, at least, maintained them with a strictly equal advantage? Wherefore, dull and impotent that ye are, has not your mutual, and immortal wrath taught one of ye the skill to subjugate the other? Would that it had! Oh! would that it had, I repeat, in the bitterness, and desperation of my heart! would that I had been the *entire* prey of *either*; that I had been all good, or all evil, and I should never have been the very wretch I am!—Jangling, discordant, demoniac powers! Curses of my being! destroyers of my future! even now, your loathsome thraldom

is upon me ! and after a long life of crime, remorse, and terrible experience of the rewards you accord your votaries, I feel, at this instant, as much torn, and tortured by your intestine feuds, as much divided by the love of wrong, and right, as, when first your fell dominion excited me to madness, and then, to murder ! God have mercy on me ! Steer my own bark, I cannot ; without one dependable principle of resistance within me, I am the sport of every breeze ; and, as it pleases fate to waft me, I shall either be wrecked, or saved !

But, I will strive to repress these ebullitions of despondency, and despair. They were awakened in me, by a sudden, and bitter confirmation of my knowledge of the imperishable perversity of my nature ; for, I felt that, even in the very moment, I was writing the lines inculcating to others, the practice of virtue, I myself was entertaining a fierce, and headlong impulse to wrong. But, the fitful phrenzy has passed ; my mind has emancipated itself from the dominion of darkness ; and I will endeavour

to pursue my theme, in the spirit in which I commenced it.

It is possible that the situation of our abode, the abode itself, and the utter seclusion of the early portion of my existence, may have had no small influence in the formation of my peculiar character. We lived among the wildest, and most desolate scenes; mountain piled upon mountain, waste following waste in endless succession; stunted trees, grotesque rocks, precipice, chasm, fissure, gorge, and defile. Here, and there, were scattered a few fertile scenes; spots of pasture land in a vast desert; but, the general features of the country, were sternness, and sterility.

The mansion itself was congenial to the locality; possessed of the mingled character of fortress, and domestic residence, large, straggling, and incommodious; divided, too, into numerous narrow, and gloomy apartments, and passages, it was eminently calculated to impress, though unconsciously, a mind naturally both sensitive, and melancholy. I remember the time, even

before I was acquainted with the influence of sympathies, and associations, or the power of self-investigation had developed itself within me, that, when the storm raged without, and the wind howled discordantly, and mournfully through the long corridors, I was dimly aware that a weight was upon my spirit, and would stealthily retire to some unfrequented corner, to hide, and indulge my depression in darkness, and solitude.

Through all periods of my life, except in moments of entirely absorbing excitement, this subserviency to the power of sound has remained to me. Perchance, my sister's skill in playing upon the organ may have had no unimportant share in perpetuating, and strengthening the morbid sensitiveness of my character, and my natural disposition to the indulgence of violent emotions. Often, have I listened to her performance of some plaintive, and holy melody, until the tears have chased each other in quick succession down my face; but, when suddenly exerting the whole power of the vast instrument,

its sweetness was converted into fury, and its stupendous harmony gradually aggrandized, until it seemed, in the might and majesty of its wrath, to roar with the roar of a troop of famishing lions,—while the old timbers, and walls of our gloomy abode trembled beneath and around me in sympathetic fear,—I felt exalted, maddened ; the thrilling skin appeared to forsake my body, and every separate hair, to stand, like wire, electrically erect on my head.

And often, since those days, have I lived to experience that, harmony may exist in such extent, and perfection, may rush upon the fluttering soul, in such a flood of power, that, jarred and shaken by tumultuous pleasure, overwhelmed and enervated by the excess of its enthusiasm, it shall strive painfully, but vainly, to hide itself in its deepest lair, as though it were seeking refuge from the pursuit of the wildest and most savage dissonance.

In addition to the negative qualities which I have assigned to my parent, I must enumerate one or two, of nearly a similar character. He

was shy, reserved, gloomy, and moody. In him was no principle of gregariousness. Like myself, an only son, the sole heir, too, of great wealth, and rank, he had been what, alas, I never was, the idol of his parents. In youth, that critical age, which leaves despite the most strenuous exertions of our will, its impress on all our subsequent life, he had never been thrown upon the world to carve his own path through it; to learn the habit of mingling without effort in the crowd; the necessity of occasional self-sacrifice, of sometimes deferring one's own wish to that of another; and of encouraging feelings of suavity and forbearance, were it only to avoid the discontent and suffering, which uncharitableness is sure to entail upon its possessor.

I have been depicting my father's character according to the notion I entertained of it, in my early years; how much is accurate, and how much erroneous, the sequel of my story will exhibit.

But partly, in consequence, I suppose of the

shade which had arisen in the impolicy of his education, and partly, perhaps, in the natural bent of his character, he ever led a life of solitude so strict, that it might almost be termed morose. He possessed but one solitary pursuit; and that one seemed directly opposed to the general tenour of his disposition, for it implied the existence of delicacy, and refinement. But, it was probably, one of those adopted caprices, which the mind contracts in very vacancy, and in that servile spirit of imitation, which the want of an original impulse engenders, and assiduously cultivates and cherishes until the habit of indulgence renders it as strong, and probably more permanent than, a spontaneous and natural passion. But, whatever was the cause, its existence seemed an anomaly in a character so insensible as that, of my father.

I refer to his love of collecting the finest works of art, both in painting and in sculpture; besides various physiological curiosities. His house was one vast magazine of the most re-

markable productions of nature, and of man. In this room, might be seen a splendid marble copy of the Venus Callipyges in immediate contact with a stuffed alligator; or, with a boa constrictor in mortal combat with a tiger, whose despairing struggles, crushed frame, and dilated, and bloodshot eyes, were delineated with a painful and almost appalling accuracy. In the next apartment, perhaps, was a figure of Christ on his cross, perfectly carved out of the section of a barley-corn, standing by the side of a colossal head of Osiris, or Cybele; while around were scattered in chaotic confusion, the bones of the mammoth, imperfect skeletons of nameless animals, rare fossils, and various other antediluvian remains mingled with the softest, the most gracious, and most beautiful specimens of the purest times of Grecian sculpture. The walls, too, were covered with the finest productions of the early Italian school; and on the tables beneath, lay numerous glittering fragments of quartz and iron, native gold, malachite, jasper, porphyry, agate, and all the richest and

rarest ores, and spars, interspersed with many a hideous and ghastly monstrosity preserved with a degree of skill, that the timid spectator found, probably, less admirable, than deplorable.

I recur thus minutely to this particular occupation, and passion of my father, in my consciousness of the great influence it exerted over both our characters. It cannot but be supposed that, in a boy of a meditative, and sombre cast of mind, the constant presence of so many remarkable objects, of such incentives to serious reflection, in an abode so gloomy and deserted as ours, must have produced a powerful effect of some kind. Morning, noon, and night, day after day, I was in hourly contact with them; yet, such was the peculiar nature of my ever restless, self-tormenting disposition, that habit never familiarized me to them, or diminished in the smallest degree, the impressiveness of our communion; for, to *commune* with them, was in the literal sense of the term, my custom. Whenever my mind was in a congenial mood, and felt a craving for their excitement, I used

to repair to the apartments that contained them; and there, among the most perfect realizations of immortal beauty, the vestiges of the ruins of empires, and of ages, the imperfect, and discoloured skeletons of my own race of ancient times and of distant lands, and the bones of the antediluvian dead, I abandoned myself even in my earliest years, to a melancholy, but seducing train of passionate thought. Oh what a fund of feeling was then within me, to be directed to either good, or evil! I came into the world a plastic creature, and an affectionate instructor might without effort, have moulded me into any form. As the twig is bent, so groweth the tree. Never shall I be persuaded that there is not a period, when every nature is ductile; the cub of the lion may be tamed, and the heart of the veriest son of Anak that ever was born, may be subjugated in its youth: but, suffer that period to escape, neglect the all precious moment, selfish, insensible, or thoughtless parent! and your offspring becomes for the remainder of his days, a steed without a bridle, as utterly in-

capable of his own control, as intractable, and rebellious to that, of others. If then, the *adult* do not fulfil *his* duty, to the authors of his being, look ye, narrowly, within your own hearts, whether ye fulfilled *yours*, to the *child*.

Among the large mass of objects which my father had assembled, all of which, or at least, the great majority of which, possessed attractions for the studious and the observant, there were two, that peculiarly monopolized my consideration, and excited my feelings. One of these, was a representation of Medusa; the other, that, of Cupid and Psyche.

The first was a picture copied from the famous gem in the Strozzi collection at Rome. Words can give no idea of its peculiar excellence. How any human power could ever have succeeded in so perfectly subjugating to visible and palpable form, the spirit of the sublimely beautiful, and terrible, was, and is, my wonder, and admiration! But what the modern mind in its most daring and visionary mood, could never even have *imagined*, the vigorous intellect,

and skilful hand, of the past, have proudly seized and conquered, and triumphantly invested with an immortal being.

It is impossible to *say* all that the countenance of this remarkable picture expresses, it contains so extraordinary a union of physical perfection and moral deformity. The features are superhumanly beautiful, and a general air of stillness pervades them ; but, it is the stillness of the evil dead. All the more stormy passions seem to have been entombed on the faultless, and frigid brow ; but grandeur, desolation, scorn, and calm, concentrated, unmitigable ferocity, are fearfully depicted in every lineament. Yet, the face possesses materially, more than the softness, and smoothness of the most fair, and the most young, though there is not a portion of it, but beams with a sentiment truly infernal. The hair is long and flowing, and thickly interspersed with raging serpents, the energy of whose action contrasts most forcibly with the stern tranquility of the countenance they surround. Alike unearthly in its loveli-

ness, and in its terror, sublimely mysterious in its nature, it seems as though the blast of hell had breathed only on its *mind*; and we gaze with a thrilling and spell-bound interest, yet scarcely know whether on the living, or the dead. But, again I feel that no words can adequately describe this startling personification of the apparently impracticable union of immortal majesty, and beauty, with all that is dark, deadly, and atrocious.

In a second picture, which, also, was a copy from an ancient jasper, Medusa was exhibited under a different aspect; and her features, and eyes were convulsed by demoniac animosity. This design is distinguished by the epithet, *Terrible*; and was evidently executed in the express purpose of inspiring the affection from which it has received its denomination. But with me, it did not succeed in fulfilling its intention; it was too animated, too replete with passion, too human; it wanted the calm, death-like, supernatural malignity of the other.

By the side of, and in strong contrast to, the

celebrated, and exquisitely graceful and passionate statue of Cupid caressing Psyche was the other object of my gloomy admiration. It was an ancient chalcedonyx; and beautifully, and terribly represented Cupid *tormenting* Psyche. His unhappy mistress is on her knees; she appears to be uttering the most heart-rending cries; her arms are tossed into the air; and her countenance expresses the extremity of anguish. Behind her, stands her fell oppressor; his brows are savagely knit; rancour and cruelty are sparkling in his eyes; and the rotundity and pulpousness of earliest youth, seem for ever to have departed from his body, the muscles of which are fiercely and prominently dilated. One of his feet rests on the back of her limbs, so that she is pinioned by the force of his weight to the earth; with his right hand, he is tearing the hair from her head; while with his left, he waves a torch, as though he were meditating the summation of his cruelty, by firing her person.

It is impossible to describe the strange, inexplicable, and thrilling feelings with which I was

wont to gaze upon these two remarkable subjects. The Medusa inspired me with a mingled sensation of poetic terror and admiration. It horrified me; but, in its horror, there was a fascination. I trembled; yet, pertinaciously clung to, and derived a wild tumultuous pleasure from, the indulgence of my wilfully entertained, and cherished fears. There was something so magnificent, so elevated, so vast, so opposed to all that is little, and human, in the gigantick moral devastation before me, that I could not but regard it with a species of unholy reverence. I was dazzled and astounded by its brilliancy, and its glory; and, in the mere proneness of poor mortal infirmity to admire, and to bow before the superb, and the dominating, almost became its votary.

In the weakness and delusion of my heart, I never tired of attempting to define to myself, the exact nature of the feelings of a being endowed with such an aspect. Were they to be dreaded or envied, admired, or contemned? Was their possessor above, or below, the retric-

bution that awaits the common sinner; too callous, or too powerful? Could any mortal man, even if rich to an unprecedented degree, in bodily and mental gifts, ever attain to such a towering height of vicious grandeur, such a god-like perfection of fiendish atrocity?

From the Cupid caressing Psyche, to the Cupid *tormenting* her, my eyes used ceaselessly to wander with an insatiate interest; I never tired of contrasting the amorous playfulness, affection, and grace of the one, with the truculence, and barbarity of the other. And then, I asked myself, "Is this representation founded in nature, and in truth, or is it the false conception of a solitarily perverse imagination? Is it possible that the same being can derive gratification from the indulgence of two such opposite sentiments? Love has its charm, all admit; but can the practice of cruelty be productive of pleasure?"

The tenour of these thoughts implies but too plainly the bias of my disposition. All egotists are, and must be, cruel. They may not inva-

riably, covet the commission of active barbarity, of positive corporeal inflictions, but their habitual disregard of the feelings, and desires of others, is a perpetual though a negative cruelty ; and insensibly hardens the heart until it becomes eternally incapable of entertaining one sentiment of sympathy.

Many indeed, are the breasts that *unconsciously* contain a love of the terrible, and the sanguinary, the dark, and the atrocious. Who has not experienced a secret pleasure in seeing in the eyes of beauty, the tears which he has himself occasioned ? Who *has* not, is unacquainted with an emotion which at once exalts him above his own nature, and sinks him to that, of a fiend ; which is at once, sublime, and degrading, godlike and infernal.

Thousands, millions, exist, I know, who would deny with real, or affected indignation, all sympathy in such a sentiment ; they will protest, perhaps believe, that they would not wilfully harm an insect. But, I will reply to them, Read the history of the past, if you are so

morally blind that you cannot derive conviction from a self-examination. Search these records ; and observe the infinite rarity of the individuals who, being possessed of that despotic station which alike secures for them indulgence and impunity, have escaped the dominion of those sanguinary principles which in a greater or less degree, are innate in every breast. Search these records ; and you will learn that, *Death to the weak !* has ever been the battle-cry of the strong.

The vast majority of the men whose acts have been sufficiently important to command the dangerous distinction of being doomed to immortality by the indelible page of History, have been but lovers of carnage, the butchers of their race. Their first essays in blood may have arisen in a selfish ambition ; but, this, has but briefly continued their sole incentive : for, of all vices, cruelty is that which possesses the greatest charm for, and most frequently exerts an exclusive influence over, the lost being who has abandoned himself to its sway. The man that

slays his foe, to protect, or advance his own interests is merely an egotist, and an assassin ; but, the man who sheds another's blood, without a just, or even a worldly selfish purpose, is a votary of cruelty. Yet, if tried by this canon, how many deserve this designation ! Nearly six thousand years have now elapsed since the creation of the world ; and it is melancholy, painful, and most humiliating to look back through this long, mazy vista of gloomy atrocity, and reflect that, during the whole of this vast period, there has scarcely perished one anointed king, one single person that has possessed despotic power, who has not deserved at the hands of his fellow men, to have inscribed upon his tomb, this just, and appalling verdict, —Here, lies the oppressor of his race ; *the votary of cruelty.*

Why then, should we deem ourselves superior in virtue to so innumerable a multitude of our predecessors ? Why then, should we arrogantly think that, even if placed in similar situations of indulgence, there is within us, the

power of resisting the temptation, which has triumphed over so many? I have, I avow, little faith in the doctrine of the great inequality of the *natural* distribution of virtue and vice, among the generations of men. I believe that all of us are born creatures of good and evil; and that each never originally possesses his share of these antagonistic principles, in any very dissimilar proportion to that, of his neighbour; the subsequent superiority, which either may attain, being the consequence of education and of that reflection, which is the growth of it.

Let not then, the modern Pharisee glorify himself in the supposition that he possesses no portion of a vice which was so strikingly prominent among the children of the past. It is within him; controlled, it is true, but, not extirpated; it exists, though it slumbers equally in the want of adequate temptation, and of the opportunity, and facility of indulgence. Tiberius was a good man, until he became an emperor; and, had he died without having attained a throne, all the world would have pertinaciously believed that he would have filled one

gloriously. He only who has been tried, and fallen, or conquered, in his trial, can tell either that which he is, or that which he is not. The lord of an imperial revenue is as justly entitled to boast that he never entertained the disposition to steal his neighbour's loaf, or the Bedouin Arab, to pride himself on his exemption from the vices of an artificial life, as the majority of the members of a highly civilized, and peaceful community, have to congratulate themselves on their abstinence from the active practice of cruelty. Who can assert what might have been the rich man's principles of honesty, had he been poor; what the Arab's unsophistication had he been born the inhabitant of cities; or what the extent of the tenderness, and forbearance of the pseudo philanthropists, who may affect to be shocked and disgusted by my crimes, had they been thrown on times of strife, anarchy, and oppression; had they endured, what *I* have endured, wrong *irreparable*, and *consequently*, temptations to vengeance, which were irresistible.

Yes; believe me, few of us have degenerated

from the iniquities of our forefathers: in all that is evil we are worthy and emulous scions of the parent tree. Our more ferocious vices only slumber; and require but propitious circumstances to awaken them, in all the increase of vigour with which a long rest has supplied them. The infant now, is naturally quite as irascible, as envious, and as vindictive, as ever was the offspring of the most facinorous Philistine; the existing boy, too, derives quite as much delight from the torture of a butterfly, or a beetle, as as did his predecessor of two, three, or four thousand years ago; and the man of the present day, were he not restrained by the strength of the laws, which, in the indirect knowledge of his own infirmity, he has, in the long course of ages, imposed upon his powers of self-indulgence, would again eagerly and cheerfully lay his fellow on the wheel, the cross, or the grid-iron, rub the rust, from the screw and the pincers, re-pile the faggots, and depopulate continents, in the *names* of religion, or policy, of heresy, or state-necessity, of Moloch or

Mahomet, but *really* in the fell, and insatiate thirst of human blood. Not from an examination of myself alone, but from an equal knowledge of others, do I deduce my judgment; and I aver that man is a *savage animal*; and not the less dangerous and sanguinary, because his paw wears the velvet of civilization. Give him but sufficient incentive, and to-day, to-morrow, or the next day, he shall without an instant's hesitation, discard his artificial fetters, his tutored tameness, stand erect in natural, and inherent ferocity, rend, like a garment, his prey into fragments, and gloat exultingly upon its expiring agonies, with all the fierceness, and all the gusto, of the rudest times.

But I have too long dwelt on the bias of the human mind to cruelty. I have not however pursued the unwelcome theme, in the selfish and fallacious hope of diminishing my own guilt, by inculpating others. My reflections commenced in a desire to trace from their germes, the vices that were in my heart; and in this effort, my mind was naturally directed to the many indica-

tions I had observed of the frequent, but unconscious existence of similar infirmities in the breasts of my fellow men. I wished therefore, and none can tell how fervently, to awaken them to a sense of a danger, the more fearful, and insidious, because seldom, if ever, suspected ; and to implore them to encourage *systematically*, and resolutely, feelings of ruth, charity, and forgiveness, until the effort shall determine itself into a habit.

I have still one feature of our abode to describe : it was built on a small island, on the northern side of a sheet of water, which might most justly have acquired the appellation of the *Dead Lake*, so asphaltine was the nature, and dark, and gloomy the hue, of the fluid of which it was composed. Indeed, as I believe I have before remarked, the whole character of the scenery around us, possessed a most remarkable rigidity. From my earliest infancy, I was only accustomed to the vicinage of all that is harsh, and grim ; nothing gracious, nothing emollient, ever presented itself to my eye. Without our

doors, was a rock black as night, a hard-featured tree, a mine of iron, a mine of lead, a chasm, a gorge, a soil impregnated with sulphur, utterly destitute of herbage, but rich as cupidity itself could desire, in valuable minerals, a general aspect of stern, and savage desolation: within our doors was—*my father*.

Ours, indeed, was not the land of promise. Often when I have gazed from our windows, at night, and seen our little lake, the very type of Acheron, surrounded as far as the eye could extend, by an ocean of flame, I have rather been prone to fancy myself in the valley of Hin-non, the Gehenna of fire. And no very violent perversion of the imagination did it require, to entertain implicitly this belief. Gigantick veins of coal that had been ignited by the carelessness of the semi-savages who tenanted the bowels of the earth, burned incessantly, night and day, in our immediate vicinity, for many years. In addition to this striking spectacle, were the numerous towering columns of white, fierce, flame surmounted by the most brilliant scin-

tillations, and a thick heavy wreath of suffocating smoke, which issued from the mouths of all the different mines. And occasionally, a roar, and a crash, terrific as thunder in a tropical clime, echoed, and re-echoed in astounding, and deafening reverberations, would smite upon the thrilling ear; while a body of light that seemed to extend to the very skies, suddenly burst in insupportable splendour upon the dazzled, and shrinking eye, as some compact, and enormous rock, which impeded man's pursuit of his divinity, gold, was hurled in innumerable fragments into the air, by the irresistible force of that tremendous agency, the fell secret whereof, according to the creed of an Italian poet, must have been communicated to him, by either the devil, or a *monk*. The dark figures too, of the half denuded, yet picturesquely attired miners, as they repeatedly, and rapidly glided before the painfully vivid light of the intense combustion which they had themselves created, imparted a fiend-like character, and activity to a scene, intrinsically, and in every other respect,

so thoroughly infernal, that it wanted but the presence of a colossal statue of brass of more than one hundred, and fifty cubits in height, to make me feel assured that I *was* in Tophet, “ which is in the valley of the children of Hinnon,” witnessing the Israelites causing their offspring to pass through fire unto Moloch.

Never shall I forget the impression created upon me, by my first acquaintance with nature in a milder form, and man in a less savage mood. This genial pleasure occurred in the abode of a retainer of my father, in the suburbs of the beautiful country town, which was within a score of miles of our stern abode. His, was one of those sweet cottages which the wealthier peasantry of all nations, occasionally create, and occupy; and I visited it at that season of the year, the month of June, when all its simple, but fascinating attractions were in their greatest perfection. It was surrounded by a fertile, placid, and smiling country, full of rich woods, and gentle uplands and lowlands; and it stood in the midst of a garden thoroughly cultivated

but eminently rustic, and picturesque, and therefore, of infinite beauty. How perfectly do I remember the ecstacy, which in my early boyhood, I experienced, when I first entered this lovely spot. Oh, the exquisite scent of those sweet flowers ! even at this moment, I seem almost to entertain anew the pleasure I then felt, so deeply, indelibly, was it impressed upon me. I ran from rose-bush to rose-bush, with a rapturous eagerness, and a sense of enjoyment, that was almost delirious. My avidity was insatiable ; tremulous with emotion, I literally reveled in perfume ; and thought I could never sufficiently indulge the divine faculty I had discovered.

The inhabitants of the cottage too, made an impression on me. They consisted of a father, and two daughters : the former, courteous, and alacritous as he always was to the son of his lord, nevertheless, did not win my heart ; but, the children were fascinating. The elder was in her twelfth year, at the period to which I am now alluding. I will not reveal her name ; I will

therefore, call her, Ianthe: subsequently, I shall recount concerning her, much that I regret.

This, as I have said, was the first intimation I ever received of the existence of a landscape less savage than our own, or of a disposition more human than that, of my sire.

And yet, in making this assertion, I am most unjust to one individual; and that individual, a dear, and near, kinswoman. No mother, alas, had I, to act as a monitress to my father, and a protectress to me; she having died in a foreign land, in my earliest childhood, a few weeks after she had given birth to a daughter, that fond, and fair sister of mine, to whom I have just alluded. She was indeed, a lovely, a virtuous and a pious girl; but, I shall now add no further description of her character, as the narrative of her actions will far more amply, and satisfactorily reveal it. I shall merely state, that perhaps, her only fault was, in my opinion, her too exalted estimation of the extent of filial duty. In vain, I repeated to her that, in our times, a daughter and a parent were neither

required, nor intended, to play the relative parts of Iphigenia, and Agamemnon: at one period of her life, I verily believe that had occasion occurred, she would have possessed the resolution to undergo voluntarily, the self-sacrifice to which the Grecian maiden was forced to concur.

Having now, sufficiently defined the general disposition of my boyhood and early youth, I will proceed to the period when I was eighteen years old, and detail the particular feelings, and character which I then possessed.

I was remarkably athletic, and active; and my mind strikingly partook of the nature of my physical being. I was in a perpetual state of restlessness, and excitement; the ceaseless prey of ten thousand irregular, and undisciplined thoughts, and aspirations. I wished, I knew not what; I sought without desiring to find; and yet, I often found that which I never desired to seek, disappointment. Hour after hour, and day after day, I passed in solitude, for my father almost wholly monopolized the

society of my sister; not, be it supposed, in consequence of any affection for her, but, of the almost menial services she rendered him, in her zealous fulfilment of all his numerous selfish wants, and whims.

Thrown thus wholly upon myself for amusement, and instruction, I would often wander, from morn till eve, among our wildest and most desolate scenes, and utterly abandon myself to the impetuous current of my thoughts. One of the principal disadvantages of this kind of life was the strong encouragement it afforded to the development of the morbid sensitiveness of my nature. The want of the habit of mingling among men, and strangers, occasioned the disquietude I experienced whenever I was permitted to repair to the neighbouring town; and this feeling gradually, and insensibly increased to such an extent that, at last, I lost the desire of frequenting the haunts of my species.

It may be asked however, why I did not follow my sister's example, and associate with my father. Did he forbid my presence? No.

But, at this period, I cannot say we were, *mutually*, sundered, for *he* never *was* attached to me ; yet, sundered we were, and for ever. *I* was divided from *him* ; not however, at this time, was *I* conscious of the existence of the eternal barrier between us. *I* avoided him instinctively, not pre-meditatedly. *I* was exiled from all intercourse with him by his moodiness, his consummate insensibility, his utter want of all natural affection, his incapability of entertaining one generous impulse. Already *I* began darkly to feel that *I* could have endured severity, rebuke, transient, and unwarranted passion, without repining ; to even personal chastisement however unmerited, *I* could have submitted, without a murmur, had any atoning transport of contrition, and kindness ensued, or occasionally varied the repulsiveness of this, or similar, injustice, and oppression. But, the cold, rigid, stern impassiveness of his conduct ; the eternal absence of all response to the affection *I* once used to entertain, and to testify ; his utter indifference to my presence, or my absence, my sickness, or my health, my pleasures, or my

pains; the impossibility of ever instigating him to sympathize in any one emotion of another, of even rousing him to be conscious of any existence but his own, and that, of those from whom he required the gratification of some immediate want; his sullen abstraction, his entire devotion to his particular pursuit, and his boundless egotism:—these, were the causes that first alienated me from the author of my being. Often, and often, when gazing upon him, have I thought, with a sad sigh, on the noble speech of Themistocles, and felt tempted to address it to him, with this slight paraphrase; “Strike me, father, but *love* me!”

I am now however, rather anticipating the current of my thoughts; at the time, to which I am alluding, I had not sufficiently analyzed them, to be accurately conscious of the causes of my reluctance to frequent the society of my parent, and of the gradual diminution of my natural affection for him. I merely felt an impulse, and without reflection, or introspection, indulged it instinctively.

But, though thus repelled by one object to

which it would naturally have attached itself, mine was not a mind to resign itself to repose, and exist tranquilly, and sterily, without passion, or desire. As I have said, I was a prey of many, that begot in me, a thousand confused, and undigested thoughts, and aspirations. Among however, all these crude, and contending sensations, existed, at this period, one marked, if not predominant feature; my love of studying the records of the Ancients.

For the History of the Moderns however, I had no such partiality. In resorting to it after a communion with its grander predecessor, I seemed to feel that I was confined, compressed; all is, at once too definite, and too little; there is no space for the flight of the mind. A sufficiency of uncertainty exists, it is true; but in it, there is neither interest, nor grandeur. That which is lost to us, we do not seek to know; and much that is known to us, we could almost wish were lost. All is ignoble; we do not even look on countless masses of slaves stirred by one giant intellect; equality, and mediocrity of

mind and destiny, of individuals, and nations, are the principal, and most fatiguing features of the unimpressive picture; and, *savage*, *bestial*, *disunited*, and *puny*, are the epithets which most accurately characterize the people of the dark, and middle ages. Omit the episode of the Crusades, and this opinion comprises about eleven hundred years of the History of the Moderns; from the time of Theodosius, to that of Charles the Fifth.

But studying the records of the Ancients, is like viewing a gigantick cavern in a foreign land; all is grand, towering, misty, stupendous, and indefinite; in the vast obscurity that confronts us, no end appears; and yet, we *know* that an end must exist. The immensity, and novelty of every object bewilder, and astound; time, locality, and circumstance alike combine to excite our interest, our wonder, and our respect; the imperfect, and visionary view we obtain of all even that is most prominent, and detailed, and the probability of never entirely penetrating the mysterious veil that shrouds

them, pique our curiosity, and, by stimulating our imagination, render the spectacle doubly impressive, and memorable.

This was the occupation that, at this time, possessed a remarkable fascination for me. I literally lived among the people of the past. Thebes, Babylon, Ecbatana, Syracuse, Tyre, were names far more familiar to me than those of the cities of my own land. But my acquaintance was not confined to these names alone; I knew, or fancied that I knew, every portion of the minutest arrangement of their streets, their squares, and their gardens. Sitting on a desolate rock, in the land of my birth, I accompanied some few of the most illustrious of their inhabitants, through the dense crowd of countless and admiring multitudes, to the baths, the judgment-seats, the temples, and the palaces. I followed them even to their homes; I conversed with their slaves, and their wives; admired the gorgeousness of their dresses, the magic splendour, and vastness of their halls, and domes; sympathized with them in their restraints, dis-

cussed the affairs of their neighbours; and abandoned myself to what I supposed, might have been the more sober, and stately character of the scandal of these great, and impressive, though semi-barbarous times.

These were among the happiest hours of my life; but, I recur to them thus minutely; not because the retrospection affords me any pleasure at this moment, but because they too, I now feel, were then *insensibly* auxiliary to the production, or rather, to the encouragement, of that train of reflection, and tendency of disposition, which subsequently led to my eternal destruction.

Among all the features of the ancients, not one, perhaps, is more striking than the frequency of the occurrence of the most heinous crimes mutually perpetrated by the nearest relatives. These narrations I used to dwell upon with an irresistible sympathy; a mixture of reprobation and interest, which I cannot define, but which must have possessed their pleasure, or I should not so repeatedly have

submitted myself to the entertainment of them. By the continuity of these reflections, I insensibly eradicated from myself that horror, which the first contemplation of a crime in direct violation of the most sacred laws of nature, never fails to occasion in even the least humane; and proportionately familiarized myself to the dangerous consciousness that the most intimate ties of blood can not always protect the aggressor from the retribution of his victim.

I know not whether I err, but it appears to me that every body must discern something very striking in fiery, inveterate hatred, *if mutual*. If however, only entertained by one party, its object being passive, and unresisting, it assumes the character of malignity and oppression, and betrays its real odiousness unmitigated by any of the more dignified features which vice sometimes assumes. But, if a hatred of the former kind, subsists between the nearest relatives, through whose veins flows the self-same blood, it possesses for the observer, a still more remarkable and thrilling interest. Mother

arrayed against daughter, father against son, brother against brother, are moral monstrosities which stir in us our strongest, and wildest sympathies. In the ancient combat of Eteocles and Polynices, there is a savage, and ferocious grandeur that commands our attention, creates our awe, and almost excites our respect; the very enormity, and fearful singularity of the crime, the very extent of the violation of the most sacred of both divine, and natural laws, invest it with that degree of apparent improbability, and real terror, which are the principal sources of poetic interest, and raise it altogether above the horror, and disgust, that a less immoral, and more vulgar, offence would occasion. We look on, and tremble; we can scarcely believe that two brothers could have been inspired by so deadly, so infernal an animosity; and yet, there is something in the image that possesses more than the power of the basilisk, for it has fascinated even the *mind*; and though we *loathe*, we never can *forget*, it.

In the self-love, and vanity of our hearts, we

may indignantly disclaim our weaknesses; but all our codes, our institutions, our social regulations, our prejudices, our very thoughts conspire to show, that, *vast* crimes contain a majesty which almost sanctifies them, in our eyes: the man that slaughters his neighbour is exterminated as an assassin; but, the butcher of a nation is deified as a conqueror.

I know not whether I express the feelings of other men; such, however, were those I entertained at this period of my youth.

It is remarkable that my fondness for reading the History of the Past, was rather sustained, than lessened by the development of an all powerful passion that might have been supposed most certain to have engulfed every less feeling in its raging whirlpool. I am now arrived at the occurrence of a change, which may be considered one of the great climacters of my life.

I recur to the hour, when I first became the prey of that omnipotent god, and demon, *Love*.

Long however, did it reign over me, before

I was endowed with the faculty of discovering the source of my uneasiness. I have described this uneasiness; my uncultivated, unanalyzed mind; my tumultuous thoughts, my objectless desires, my incapability of rest. There was within me, a fiery, and irresistible incentive to perpetual action, and exertion of mind, and body; but its effect was mechanical; I neither knew, nor suspected its existence; and I yielded myself passively and unconsciously to its impulse. My heart was in flames: but, like the eternally condemned in the Eastern fiction, though my suffering was infernal, I could not discern that I was burning.

Silently and insensibly did this insidious, and imperious passion, obtain an unbounded influence over my imagination. It gradually became the supreme director of my thoughts and feelings; and, without the shade of a suspicion of my bondage, I was its entire slave. I could no longer see but through its medium; and every thing I regarded, received from it, a color. I neither slept, nor ate; night and

day, I lived in a state of disquietude; but, all the while, was as ignorant of the nature of my pang, as I was of the oppressor, the incubus, that inflicted it.

Still however, as I have said, I retained my predilection for my favourite study. Potent as was the passion that had arisen within me, it rather coloured and moulded, than destroyed; it rather directed into different channels, old affections, feelings, and prejudices, than substituted new. It seemed to possess none of the spirit of innovation; but to proceed with a cautious respect for the ancient occupants of its sudden conquest. Would that it had been the veriest exterminator, and eradicated every feature which then formed a portion of my being!

But though I still recurred to the events of the past, with even more than my former assiduity, and gratification, yet the object was almost wholly changed. Instead now, of dwelling with interest, on the mystical, the grand,

and the atrocious, I reaped my pleasure from a very different field. My attention gradually became exclusively directed to the gentler, and the better, portion of the Historian's theme; and, among the most beautiful heroines of antiquity, I only found so many mistresses for my unconscious idolatry.

I cannot describe, and possibly, none can conceive, the pleasure which I derived from this vagary of the imagination; and often, during the lapse of whole, and successive hours, I used to sit, and unreservedly abandon myself to the indulgence of it. Each individual whose character, or reputation struck me, I endowed with a form, invested with a being; and then, I never tired of arraying them all before me, establishing comparisons, elaborately, and minutely criticizing their various pretensions to beauty, and indefatigably examining them, under all the different phases in which I chose to present them to my scrutiny. Mine, indeed, was a supreme court: I was at once creator,

and exterminator; denouncer and defender; and, however, iniquitous my decree, it was yet never disobeyed.

For a time, the principal, and most successful, competitors for the largest share of my affections, were Atalanta, Stratonice, and a Roman Matron.—Atalanta!—A *running female!*—There is something so exquisite in the idea of a woman who *can* run with grace, an achievement which some recent author declares to be impossible. But could he have seen *my* Atalanta, however great the extent of his critical fastidiousness, or acerbity, he must have confessed that he had erred. She was perfection. My principal pleasure was to fancy her engaged in the midst of her swiftest race, contending with the gentle wind, which, bearing elegantly behind her, her white and floating garments of almost ethereal texture, revealed conspicuously to my enraptured eye, the enchanting outline, and proportions of her divine form. When I had sufficiently admired her attitudes, and action, in her almost bird-like flight

across the plain, I made Hippomenes drop one of his golden apples; and then, I fancied the sparkling eyes, the playful smile, and childish eagerness, with which the gay and airy nymph gracefully stooped to seize the glittering toy. Quickly however, she resumed her career with the rapidity of light; when, another of the treacherous baubles judiciously cast in the vicinity of her path, instantaneously arrested her speed, and again diverted her attention from the progress of her artful, and also, swift-footed competitor. After a few brief, but valuable, moments devoted to a rapturous admiration of her precious prize, she renews her race with the lightness and air of a swallow sailing with the breeze. But again the fatal stratagem is too successfully repeated; and, after her recovery from the reverie of pleasure which the possession of the third apple had occasioned, the luckless, and artless maid, raising her eyes, sees with astonishment, and panic, that her cunning, and dexterous competitor has arrived at the goal. Then, I fancied her tearful glances, and disconsolate looks; her doubts,

her apprehensions, her mortified pride, and her dejection: the expostulations, prayers, arguments, and artful flatteries of her lover, and conqueror; the maid's gradual restoration to serenity; the faint sunshine of an incipient smile hovering over her fragrant lips: the entire relaxation of her rigidity; the first birth, and scarcely perceptible progress, of her interest in the eloquence, and in the gallantries, of her crafty suitor; the rapid development of this feeling: and finally, her submission to, and union with, the man who has had the skill, and the fortune, not only to vanquish, but, to win her.

Surely, this is a bewitching fiction! as playful, elegant, and poetical in its action, and conception, as the image itself is beautiful to the imagination: and even now, spiritless and prostrate as I am, I think that it is well worthy the wild and passionate admiration which it excited in me, in the days of my youth.

Stratonice seated by the sick bed of Antiochus, occupied a very inferior position in my

estimation, and even the Roman Matron, my favorite personification of all the dignity, simplicity, chastity, and rectitude, of the best of the ancient times, could not vie with the graceful, and fascinating Atalanta.

But one there was, who not only *did* vie with her, but far surpassed her. I allude to the bride of Tigranes, the Armenian Prince. The incident that immortalizes her, is recorded in the Cyropœdia; but, celebrated as it is, I cannot resist the temptation of transcribing it succinctly.

The great Cyrus having hostilely entered into Armenia, acted so skilfully, and promptly, that, without the interchange of a blow, he made not only the King of that country, but his entire family, and court, his prisoners. He then determined to bring them to a trial; and, for this purpose, assembled the captains of the Medes, and the Persians, as well as all the chief among the Armenians themselves.

When the day of judgment arrived, Cyrus having required the King to solemnly promise

that he will answer all his questions truly, demanded whether he had not justly been made the tributary of his grandfather, Astyages. The royal prisoner being compelled to answer in the affirmative, he is then asked what reason he can allege for having violated the treaty. He replies none, but the desire of acquiring liberty for himself, and for his children. Cyrus then desires him to say, what would be the meed he would award to one of his own vassals, if he should have adopted towards him a similar course.

“ Though I should pass sentence on myself,” cried the intrepid sovereign, “ I must declare the truth: I would put him to death !”

At these words, Tigranes, his son, tore his tiara from his head, and rent his garments, as though the King had actually been doomed to the fate, he had suppositively decreed to another. Speedily however, recovering himself, he pleaded his father’s cause with so much ability, and genuine affection, that Cyrus touched with compassion, turns to the King, and demands with what number of troops, and sums of money, he

will assist him in his approaching war against the Babylonians, if he should yield to his son's intreaties, and spare his life. He replies that all he possesses, is at the disposal of his conqueror. Cyrus, on most liberal conditions, grants him an entire pardon for himself; but then, inquires what he will give him for the ransom of his wives?

“All that I have in the world!” hastily replied the affrighted King.

“And to save the lives of your children?” demanded Cyrus.

“Willingly, cheerfully, would I make the same sacrifice for them,” rejoined the trembling father.

“Then, for this time forth,” said his generous victor, “you are my debtor for the double of your possessions, for I return them to you *twice*; once for your children, and once, for your wives. And you, Tigranes,” he added, addressing the Prince, who was recently married, “at what price, will you redeem the liberty of your bride?”

“ At the price of ten thousand lives, if I had them !” he replied.

All however, received their freedom without any further concession ; and, as they were returning to their homes, they broke into the most enthusiastic expressions of the admiration which Cyrus’ generosity, and munificence excited in them. No other subject was discussed during the whole route ; some never tired of extolling the suavity of his temper, and his consummate policy ; some, his valour ; some, his wisdom ; and others were equally energetic in praise of the beauty of his person, and of the majesty of his mien.

“ And you,” said Tigranes, addressing himself to his bride, “ what did you think of Cyrus’ aspect, and deportment ?”

“ I do not know,” replied the Princess ; “ I did not observe him.”

“ Upon what object then, could you have fixed your eyes ?” demanded the Prince in much surprise, not untinctured by disappointment.

“ Upon him,” she replied, “ *that said he would*

give ten thousand lives to rescue me from bondage."

Is it possible for mortal man to imagine a speech more exquisitely beautiful than this! more full of pathos, modesty, nature, and feminine, sublime affection. There *was* a time, when I, the ruthless, the remorseless, could never read it, but tears of admiration, and sympathy, stole insensibly into my eyes: so strange a riddle is the human heart!

The passion I entertained for my ideal incarnation of this fair, and virtuous wife, is inexplicable to a being of a temperament dissimilar to my own. By no mortal means, could I render intelligible to a phlegmatic, and incongenial disposition, to such a mind, for example as that of my father, the extent of my idolatry for this creature of my imagination. At night, she haunted and beautified my slumber in visions; during the day, I passed hour after hour, in her society. I walked with her, I talked to her; and, with her hand in mine, and gazing steadily on her face, I have sat for an entire morning,

as perfectly happy, as my fiery and perturbed nature could ever allow me to be.

Yes, mine, was the love that is of the mind; at no period of my life, did I possess any of those grosser particles which characterize the passions of the majority of men. In a far more than common degree, I experienced the *necessity* of loving; but, my imagination was too strong for the dominion of the senses. The most devoted homage I ever offered to woman partook more of the head, than the body, was less spiritual, than material; and consequently, contained a force, a concentration, a fire, a madness, which the mere libertine, the simply Mussulman admirer of a form without a soul, can never even conceive.

I shall now commence the narrative of the incidents of my life; and record the effects of my first entertainment of the passion of love for a less visionary being; for one, who though of mortal mould, possessed all the qualities of a creature of the imagination.

THE PARRICIDE.

PART THE FIRST.

WHILE my heart, and mind were in the state, which I have described, thus ready to be inflamed by the first stray spark that might alight upon them, the prelude of that incident occurred, which imparted a color to the whole of my subsequent life.

One day, when my sister, and I, were seated at breakfast, with my father, he casually remarked that, if his brother should die, his daughter would be left an unprotected orphan.

Now, nothing can give a more complete idea of the extent of my parent's habitual taciturnity,

and reserve, than the avowal of the fact, that, until this moment, neither my sister, nor myself, ever even entertained a suspicion that he had a brother, or any other relative.

But, our surprise was destined, if possible to be increased ; for, our father, who seemed resolved to concentrate, in the present minute, all the loquacity that ought properly to have been dispersed through the remainder of his life, added that his brother was dangerously ill ; that he had received an account of the impossibility of his recovery, though he might continue to linger during many successive weeks : that his daughter attended the sick bed of her dying parent, with a constancy and a kindness that were exemplary ; and finally, that, when the moment which was inevitable should have passed, and her father been buried, he was determined that the beautiful orphan should find a lasting home, in his house.

Here, the oracle ceased, never again to reveal itself with an equal volubility. But, how much

the matter, how infinite the food for reflection, with which it had supplied me ! My sister, and I talked frequently on the subject ; but not to her, or to any living being, did I communicate, or *could* I have communicated, one tithe of the thoughts it occasioned in me.

Before however, I discuss my own feelings, perhaps, I may as well take an opportunity of relating the causes of this *impar sibi*, this striking act of inconsistency in my father. That he, the least generous, the least charitable, the least hospitable of men, should suddenly deem himself bound to provide a refuge for a destitute kinswoman, was to me, at this period, an enigma, which I could only partially solve. And thus, it remained, a source of curiosity, and perplexity, until the lapse of time, the fair orphan herself, and corroborating circumstances, supplied me with the entire elucidation.

Though he called him, brother, the dying man was but the brother-in-law of my parent, whose sister he had married in defiance of her

relative's peremptory prohibition. My father, whose estimation of the obedience due to his authority was very far from limited, never forgave the perpetrators of an act, which taught him that though he possessed the will, he wanted the power, to enforce his tyranny. To the extent of his means however, he exhibited his implacability; for, from the day of their union, until that, of their deaths, in spite of all their advances, and solicitations, he never would consent either to meet them, or even to intimate to them by letter, the cessation of his sense of injury, and hostility. For years however, they persisted in their attempts, yet never could effect a reconciliation. Poor victims of their own goodness of heart, and charity! I could have told them that, even though they and their oppressor should have been endowed with a supernatural extent of existence, their labors would have been fruitless; for, they were appealing to one to whom their virtues were unintelligible, and who, when once roused from

his apathy, into vindictiveness, cherished it with all the undying tenacity of a weak, narrow, and perverse intellect.

Hard however, as was the heart of the ruthless author of my being, impenetrable as his selfishness appeared, I imagine that even he must at last have been touched by the Christian conduct of his relatives. In some unoccupied moment, that stern monitor, conscience, must have faintly whispered into his ear, a suspicion that all the actions of his life, were not really quite so immaculate as he was habitually disposed to consider them. Perhaps, this misgiving repeated at intervals, at length, induced a species of half unconscious contrition; which, though not strong enough to instigate him to abandon his animosity, and thereby subject himself to the imputation of having erred in entertaining it, yet, probably, ultimately, compelled him to the adoption of the course, I have narrated. He struck, I suspect, a sort of bargain with his incommodious reprobate; if it

would tranquilly allow him, to indulge his groundless antipathy to his relatives, during their lives, he would, if he should survive them, make them a reparation, by undertaking the charge of their orphan.

There might however, have been other, and even more selfish, motives for this determination; motives that trivial as they may seem to many, had, I am sure, a very considerable weight with so utter an egotist. **Œ**none, for that was the fair name of the still fairer girl, was a proficient in many of the less grave sciences; a species of knowledge, which, in my father's eyes, would have been more than an equivalent for a multitude of offensive qualities. The idea of securing to himself another docile, and intelligent pupil, another servant, to whom, under his own occasional superintendence, he could fearlessly entrust the arrangement of the most precious contents of his museum, would have been, I am convinced, alone a sufficient incentive to have induced him to domesticate with a male-

factor. Indeed, subsequent circumstances will show that this opinion is very far from being exaggerated. I ought to add however, that my father had had ample opportunities of acquainting himself with CEnone's accomplishments, and virtues, having several times met her, during his occasional residence in the family of a wealthy individual, in our neighbouring town; to whose house he repaired, in no feeling of friendship, or love of social intercourse, but, in the premeditated intention of cajoling him into the sale of several remnants of antiquity, on the possession of which he had set his heart. It is scarcely possible to describe the perseverance, the calculation, the craft, with which he would patiently labour during whole years, for the attainment of any rarity which he coveted. If his contemned sister had been the proprietor of a museum, she might have dictated the most imperious terms of peace, and he would have accepted them not only with humility, but with thankfulness.

I will now return to the deep impression made upon me, by his memorable communication. My heart, as I have said, was in a state of ignition, and it required but a breath to excite it into a flame. Imagine then, the effect produced upon me, by the knowledge that a maiden, and a "*beautiful*" one—for, of all my father's speech, this was the word that rang most frequently in my ears—would shortly become a resident beneath the same roof with myself; with me, who, with the exception of my sister, and the two lovely children of my father's retainer, had never even looked upon the animate female form, in any fairer shape than that, of the half savage peasantry of our district.

Farewell to all my dreams of the past ! farewell, to the Roman Matron, Stratonice, Atalanta, and even to the nameless bride of Tigranes ! Now, all my thoughts were given to *Œnone*. She became the mainspring of my visionary existence, the sun around which,

my mind alone revolved. Before, I was content to embody an idea, and to vary its form, until I had composed one that pleased me; and then, I attached myself to it with perfect confidence, never entertaining a suspicion of the possibility of my representation being inaccurate. But now, I had the double excitement of not only investing a name with a shape, but of endlessly conjecturing whether my shadow would bear any resemblance to the substance of the original. I pourtrayed her to myself, under every possible variety of just proportion, and aspect; majestic, and sylph-like, light as a Dryad, and stately as an empress, fragile and ample, vivacious and reflective, all the numberless and most opposite qualities that the human form can assume, by turns, I accorded to my personification of *Œnone*.

As the days and weeks advanced, my desire to become acquainted with the object of my thoughts, grew almost insupportable. I watched the progress of every hour; time appeared to

me to be laden with lead; and I never ceased to ask myself, When will the day arrive that shall bring to me *my* CEnone? for so, already I delighted to call her. And this strong desire for her presence, caused the selfishness of my disposition to manifest itself in a remarkable manner; for, as I knew that her arrival would be consequent on the death of her father, several times, I detected myself in the indulgence of the guilty wish that a life so opposed to my gratification, would quickly terminate. Insensible however, as I was, in all that related to self-knowledge, or self-condemnation, I could not but be conscious that this feeling was an inhuman one; and I strove to repress it; but still, it would constantly recur to me.

I feared to ask my father for any information respecting her; indeed, at no time of my life after, I mean, the utter thoughtlessness, and indomitable vivacity of early boyhood had passed, did I ever dare to question, or even accost him, unless he previously testified some

indication of a disposition to communicate with me: yet, I must again declare that my repugnance arose, at this period, in no apprehension of his severity, but simply in the chill, the deadly atmosphere of invisible ice, in which he was enveloped.

Respecting however, the present source of my interest, and anxiety, not one word of elucidation did he impart. Morning after morning arrived, and still he descended to his daily pursuits; yet, never did he recur, or even indirectly allude, to that communication, which to him, was only the mere accidental expression of a passing thought; but, to his too impressible son, was the formation of an epoch in his life. I was therefore, left to the quiet indulgence of my hopes, and the endurance of my fears, without possessing the slightest information to authorize the entertainment of either. But, sometimes, when my spirits were high, I delighted myself with the idea that the day of her arrival would be almost immediate;

and at others, I thought with apprehension and regret, that it might be eternally postponed by the recovery of her parent.

At last, one morning, my father made his appearance arrayed in black. My pulses throbbed; I literally trembled with delight; and could with difficulty conceal the elation which I experienced. The repast however advanced; yet, not a word of explanation was uttered; and I began to regard my father's funereal apparel, with a diminished sensation of gratification. Still, his silence continued; and gradually my feelings were growing more in unison with those, which the emblems of death ought to have excited, when, he stated in his dryest and most phlegmatic manner, as though he were scarcely consciously uttering the least interesting and most trivial circumstance, that the father of OEnone had expired, during the previous week, and, on the following morning, his daughter would arrive at our abode.

I felt a thrill that I cannot describe; the

blood rushed into my face, and then revelled in one mighty gush upon my heart, until I became faint with excess of pleasure; and was obliged to stagger from the room, to hide, and indulge, in solitude, the emotions which were overwhelming me.

How I passed through the remainder of that day, and the ensuing night, I scarcely know. But, I well remember that the prevailing sensation was one of triumph; triumph in the anticipation of having at last secured to myself that fondest object of all my most cherished, and impetuous desires, the power of associating to the full extent of my inclination, with a living, an actual woman; no vapid creature of the imagination, but a thing of speech and action, of strength and weakness, and *perhaps*, of passion, and principle, reason and error.

How long and comprehensive was the flight too, that I took into futurity on that night! what visions of enjoyment, and rapture did I not create; and alas, how little did the final

reality accord with my anticipations ! Too often, have all experienced a similar disappointment; one, of such frequent occurrence, that it seems as though Fortune purposely, and for the sole gratification of a malicious impulse, determined that we should never realize the events we have imagined, however rational, and probable our conjectures may have been.

But, the night passed; and the morning arrived, and found me with unclosed eyes, still impatiently watching the tedious progress of the hours. At last, unable any longer to endure a suspense, which was rendered intolerable by the restlessness of my body, I sprang from my bed; and, having hastily apparelled myself, took my station at the window, from which I could command a view of the only road to our house. Here, I sat for hours in an agony of anxiety; but, though my desires imparted to my eye, more than a hawk's quickness of perception, I could only discern the accustomed objects, the miners, the fires, and the blasted rocks.

At last, a speck made its appearance in the farthest distance; I watched it with an eagerness that, for a few moments, frustrated its own intentions; for, I was blinded by the excess of my effort. I averted my head, and closed my eyes. Then, I looked again in the direction of the object, which had so excited my interest. My conjecture was right; it *was* a carriage!—Slowly, it approached; and at length, reached, and stopped at, our gate.

Sudden, and almost irresistible was the impulse I then entertained, to rush down to meet, and welcome our long-desired guest. But, even in that moment of excitement, my habitual dread of my father, arrested me; and I remained fixed to, and trembling at, the window, awaiting in a fever of impatience the appearance of the unknown object of my singular passion.

My heart beat so tumultuously, and my whole frame was so disordered by the anarchy of my mind, that my sight almost failed me.

Dimly, and faintly, I saw my father approach the carriage; and a tall, elegant figure, arrayed in the deepest black, and her face completely concealed in a thick veil of a similar hue, placing her hand upon his extended arm, gracefully, but slowly, and almost solemnly, descended from the cumbrous vehicle. Scarcely, had her foot, rested on the last step, ere an animal more light, and beautiful than words can express, sprang from the carriage, and vanished in the entrance to the house. So rapid was its action, so brief was my view of it, and so disturbed were my senses, that I could not even distinguish its kind; but I thought that it was a fawn. In another moment, the whole pageant had disappeared; and I staggered to, and sank on, a chair, oppressed, and subdued by excess of emotion.

As soon as I had recovered myself, and conjectured that the marks of my agitation had passed from my countenance, I descended in the hope of encountering that fair stranger

whom, though I pined, I yet half feared, to meet. When I reached the door of the apartment, which I supposed her to occupy, I stood for a moment, with my hand trembling on the lock, in a mingled fit of eagerness, and apprehension. Thoroughly ashamed however, of my puerile pusillanimity, I summoned my reason, and my courage, to my aid, and boldly entered the room ; when, I discovered that my panic had been even more causeless than I had deemed it. No stranger was there ; I found but my sister, who acquainted me that *Œnone* had pleaded her depression and fatigue, and demanded, and obtained from my father, a consequent permission to retire to her chamber, for the remainder of the day.

Though in this communication was the source of much bitter disappointment to me, yet, strange to say, it contained something of relief. But, in my sister's arms, and resting on her lap, was that, which, for some moments, entirely suspended my consciousness of this

mingled feeling, and substituted one, of unalloyed pleasure. She was eagerly engaged in caressing the beautiful animal of which I had had but so transient a glance as it entered our abode; and which proved, what I had imagined it to be, a fawn. As eagerly, I advanced, to touch and fondle it; then, excited by my own endearments, and utterly unable to resist the impulse I entertained, I almost forcibly withdrew it from the grasp of my reluctant sister, raised it in my arms, and pressed it passionately against my heart.

It was indeed a singularly, and perfectly graceful animal of a breed with which I was wholly unacquainted. Its form was truly and transcendently beautiful; its color that, of the dove; and its eyes were almost startling, they were so strikingly eloquent. One could scarcely regard them, and continue to believe that the creature to whom they belonged, could be devoid of reason. Every look literally seemed surcharged with intelligence, and sentiment;

and they were so exquisitely transparent, so perfectly liquid, that their surface was not discernible to slight and common observation.

The pleasure I experienced in caressing this animal was extreme. Not only was the object most winning, and fascinating in itself, but it belonged to *her*, it had but a moment before left her presence ; it had been touched by her ; perhaps, her breath was still warm upon its face ; perhaps, it had just been rendered consecrate by her endearments ! In these thoughts, I kissed it, and embraced it with a passion and a warmth, that must have appeared unintelligible to my graver sister.

But, the poor animal did not seem to participate in the feelings which prompted my caresses ; on the contrary, every action manifested its uneasiness and discontent. His feeble struggles to escape from my grasp ; his restless, and plaintive eye perpetually wandering from my face to the door, all indicated his desire to rejoin his mistress. His expressive motions, and looks,

were not to be miscomprehended ; and my pitying sister immediately undertook to see the faithful animal safely conveyed to the chamber of the object of its attachment.

As soon as it had disappeared, all my thoughts instantly reverted to their usual theme, self. I then, recollecting that I was now doomed to await the progress and termination of another lingering day, before I could acquaint myself with the features of the unconscious object of my passion ; before I could look upon the face of the stranger, and the unknown, into whose custody I had committed my heart, and its most impetuous passions. In addition to these, arose other, and more painful reflections : it is true, that she was beneath our roof, and the moment of our interview could now be only briefly delayed. But, might she realize my expectations ? or if she did, might she deign to accept the homage, the idolatry, which I was prepared to offer her ? Might she not contemn me, and spurn my passion ?

In these conjectures, was food for self-torture sufficient to render me insensible to all external objects, and to the passage of time. Almost unconsciously therefore, elapsed the remainder of the day; and the following morning, found me exhausted, agitated, and but ill prepared for the interview, which I even almost dreaded, as much as desired.

But I must not omit to relate succinctly, a remarkable dream that occurred to me, on that memorable night. In one of the few brief periods of perturbed sleep, which, in spite of my restlessness of mind, my extreme bodily exhaustion secured for me, I thought I had clandestinely stolen into the chamber of my cousin. She was lying upon a bed, the furniture and decorations of which, were of the deepest black; her garments, and a veil that concealed her face, were of the same sable color. I slowly, and hesitatingly approached with awe, and apprehension; and, after a moment's irresolution, and an internal combat with the weight that was

upon my spirit, I cautiously but timidly removed the veil, and discovered a countenance of transcendent beauty, and sweetness of expression. I was enraptured ; and stooped to press a passionate kiss upon the lovely sleeper ; when, just as my lips were about to unite themselves to hers, I saw the features suddenly change, and assume the exact resemblance of the Medusa of the ancient gem. There, it was before me, a perfect incarnation of this too remarkable achievement of human art ; the same exquisite beauty of form, and the same gigantic moral depravity. I was spell-bound ; and, utterly powerless and incapable of withdrawing my face from its immediate contiguity to the object of my terror, I felt the eyes of the demon glare into my very soul. Suddenly, a voice, indescribably fierce, and penetrating, though subdued, hissed into my ears, "*I am thy Destiny.*" The snakes in the hair arose in fury ; one of them darted its forked tongue into my brain ; and I awakened in an agony of real fear, and ideal torture.

This vision was but little calculated to aid me in recovering my serenity; and when the hour for our reunion at our morning repast arrived, it found me in a state of ineffable agitation. But, the die was cast; and whether I desired it, or apprehended it, the meeting between me, and *Œnone* must now occur. The moment for which I had so long pined, had come at last; and speedily, I must learn whether the images I had formed of her personal aspect, were destined to be confirmed, or refuted.

I entered the room, with the feelings of a culprit, rather than those of a lover. *Œnone* was there!—I stood in her presence speechlessly, tremblingly, as though I had been arraigned before her, a convicted and dastardly felon to hear the sentence of my judge.

In a few brief moments, however, I recovered sufficient self-possession to observe her, though timidly, and furtively. How beautiful she was! Her countenance pale, and tranquil, was of the purity, and stillness of the chastest work of the

Grecian sculptor's art. Her stature was rather superior to that of the majority of her sex; and it contained a union of delicacy, grace, fragility, and majesty, which, as these qualities are of almost an incongruous nature, is of rare occurrence. But, the most striking feature of her face were her eyes; large, and liquidly pellucid, they possessed a fascination that is perfectly ineffable, so plaintively, beautifully eloquent was their touching, their divine expression. Her dark hair was simply, and elegantly divided on her forehead; and the deep sable of her garments contrasted strongly, and most agreeably, with the brilliant fairness of her complexion, her neck, and her hands. Her foot was small, but perfectly proportioned to the size of her form; and I afterwards discovered that she possessed that infinitely rarest of all female charms, a delicate, ample, and thoroughly symmetrical arm. Not a single ornament appeared on her person; her whole apparel was as remarkable in its simplicity, as in its con-

geniality to the character of her beauty; but a solitary, and half-opened rosebud, secured in her girdle, was rendered strikingly conspicuous by the strong relief of her robe.

Such was *Œnone*!

Whether she resembled any of the particular images I had formed of her, I cannot positively say; she could not have been very dissimilar to some one of them, so fertile had been my fancy; but, I well remember that she surpassed my utmost expectations of the extent of her attractions.

My father introduced me to her, in his usual laconick, abrupt and unpropitiating manner; for, his utter want of all natural affection generally manifested itself in a peculiar coldness, and imperativeness of tone, whenever he spoke to, or concerning, either me, or my sister. *Œnone* however, scarcely regarded me; not that there was contempt, or pride, in this neglect of courtesy, which arose solely, and evidently, in her abstraction, and depression, of spirit. When

I studied her countenance more closely, I plainly saw, the traces of her affectionate vigilance, and anxiety in her attendance upon her parent; and her moral being had suffered even still more perceptibly; she was silent, thoughtful, and, though manifestly desirous to propitiate, generally inattentive to all that was passing around her. My father, who, to her displayed more suavity than I had ever previously seen him evince, occasionally addressed to her a few incoherent questions respecting her former mode of life; all of which had evidently only the effect of increasing her sorrows, by sustaining and refreshing her memory of the past. To these injudicious, and unfeeling recurrences, she replied, for a time, in a broken voice, and with a strong apparent effort to repress her grief: at last, they became intolerably painful, and she requested to be allowed to retire to her chamber. Ungraciously, was this permission accorded by my father, who was so little sensible of another's pain, that, provided

he was pleased, he could seriously have required the insect, while he was engaged in impaling it for the purpose of microscopic observation, to sympathize in his pleasure. Thus, ended my first brief interview with *Œnone*.

And what was the impression it left upon my mind? One, of unalloyed satisfaction, exultation! At last, I had secured for myself the uninterrupted society of a beautiful woman; and, though her words had been far too few, yet, both speech, and countenance, clearly indicated that she was not only intellectual, but highly educated.

After this, interview followed interview, and each only tended to strengthen still more, the feelings which the first had originated in me.

There is a sanctitude, a majesty, a sublimity, in the sorrow which is occasioned by death, that no other sorrow possesses. A fond, and virtuous daughter mourning her bereavement of her father, is one of the noblest, most touching, and dignified spectacles that human nature

can present. In *Œnone*, this charm was rendered peculiarly impressive, and engaging, by the extreme sweetness of her disposition; she was so mild, so meek, so resigned, yet so profoundly melancholy, that the hardest heart must have been softened by a communion with her. She read me a lesson which ought to have taught me my duty; she walked steadily in the path which I felt myself incapable of even entering: and, such was my vast, and conscious inferiority, never should I have believed, unless I had beheld her bright example, that mortal being could have sustained affliction, with so divine a grace.

The style, and delicacy of her beauty too, superadded an illusion, which tended greatly to augment the sympathy that her sorrows excited. There was something ethereal about her; she seemed spiritualized by the nature, and extent of her grief. Her loveliness was of a character far less earthly, than aerial; and not her form alone created, but her habits, and manners

united to strengthen, this impression. Her voice, that most powerful, but little considered, and oftentimes, undiscovered agent in influencing our estimation of female pretensions to attraction, was so exquisitely soft, possessed a tone so sweetly peculiar, was so clear, so deliberate, so thrillingly musical, that it seemed as though it emanated from no human organ, but was some woodland melody of Nature's own creation. Her actions too, were so gentle, so buoyant, and so utterly noiseless; and her figure and features so delicate, so apparently immaterial, so totally devoid of all that is characteristic of mere plebeian mortality, that often during the twilight of the summer's evening, I have regarded her, until, my eyes dazzled and confused by the very steadfastness and permanence of my gaze, I have seriously deluded myself into the belief, that she was pervious to the passage of light, and that I beheld the rays of the moon permeating her arms, her neck, and her face.

The mere repetition of these credulous fancies

will show, at once the extent of the reverence, and of the passion, I entertained for her. But, what were her feelings with respect to me?—Did she reject, or did she respond to my homage; or was she so totally absorbed in her grief, that she did not even observe the impression which she had created upon me?—How often, and with what intense anxiety, did I ask myself, these agitating questions!—But, all my observations, and conjectures, were equally fruitless; and many, many months elapsed, before I could afford myself any other than a vague and unfounded reply, or attain the slightest clue to an elucidation of my doubts and fears.

When she first arrived at our abode, she was in her twenty-eighth year, and I, in my twentieth; a large disparity of age, at all periods of life, but perhaps, particularly at ours. In addition to this source of a marked difference between us, were added other causes that tended considerably to augment it. Naturally, she possessed a most intelligent mind, which

had been highly cultivated by a fond, and judicious parent; she had seen the world; she knew how to avail herself of her acquirements, and, in spite of all her toleration, and benevolence, she possessed an acuteness which compelled her to discern the deficiencies of others.

In this state of intellectual culture, how much was there to contrast with mine. I was a mere rustic, sensitive, self-mistrustful boy; rustic, however, I mean only in the sense of perfect ignorance of all conventional manners, and of all large societies. To the denomination of rusticity, might also have extended a certain degree of uncouthness of manner; but, in my nature was no particle of the coarseness of the clown. On the contrary, as I shall shortly state, I was possessed of fastidiousness to an excess, which even now, I should be perplexed to explain how, and whence, in the wild and semi-barbarous district wherein I was born, I could have acquired it.

I was not, as I have shown, wholly unlearned. But, I had never received any systematic edu-

cation. My father, I believe, or some one delegated by him, in my earliest boyhood, had taught me the distinction of letters, and the rudiments of orthography. This, is all the extraneous assistance I ever obtained; and I feel that I may thank my solitude, and the consequent necessity of creating my own occupations, for those spontaneous exertions which have secured to me, the limited learning I possess. But, in my first intercourse with others, this conversance with books was of little utility to me; for, in my utter want of all worldly apprehension, I knew not how to apply the scanty knowledge I had really obtained. Consequently, in comparison with CEnone, I appeared the very personification of Ignorance. I felt keenly, bitterly my inferiority; and what was worse, I saw but too plainly that she was conscious both of my deficiency, and of her own superior intellectual improvement.

It must not however, be supposed that I was jealous of her excellence; on the contrary, I adored it. But I was mortified by the

fear that her perception of my sciolism might prevent me from ever inspiring her with feelings respondent to mine. How could she love the person whom she could not respect? and how could she entertain respect for him whose too apparent puerilities must frequently have excited her regret, and sometimes, perhaps, a blended sensation of pity and of ridicule?

These apprehensions were the great alloy to the perfect happiness, I should otherwise, at this period, have experienced; they were the golden apple which Discord had cast into the midst of the festivity of my heart. My own feelings told me that a woman must *admire*, must discover, or *suppose*, the existence of a certain degree of excellence in a man, before, she can resign her affections to his care. Any delusion of this kind however, I was but too conscious was little likely to operate in relation to me, and Cœnone. What then, had I to offer her to attract a return of the sentiments I entertained? What?—Why, the strongest, the

wildest, the maddest, the most unbounded, the most idolatrous passion that ever instigated mortal being!—And, among all the many engines that may be employed in the warfare between the sexes, with a more powerful, a more prevailing one than mine, man cannot pursue his attacks upon the female heart. *Si vis me flere, dolendum est primum ipsi tibi:* If you wish another to love, you yourself must first love sincerely. All the strong passions are contagious; and the mere exhibition of any of them, generally begets a similar, or a respondent one, in the breast of its object. But unfortunately, or fortunately, he who experiences an attachment in the truth, fervor, and excess of mine, rarely, if ever, combines with it, any of those ratiocinating faculties which would open his eyes to the value of his possession, and inspire him with the judgment, and the craft, to avail himself of it, to the utmost. Thus, though I was endowed with one of the most potent means of success, I had no sus-

picion of either its power over another, or its existence in myself: I had eyes but they could not perceive; and ears, but they could not understand.

We may love as we will, in after years, we may even love more fondly, more calmly, and more durably, but, I doubt whether we can ever again experience that complete submersion of self, in the welfare and interests of another, that supreme perfect confidence, that total absence of all suspicion of the truth and extent of either our own feelings or of those of their object, and that unbridled, unlimited abandonment of our entire reasoning being to the current of our emotions, which *first* love rarely fails to occasion in even the least generous. In all that related to CEnone, the action of my selfishness was wholly suspended; and, for the first time since my birth, my existence was interwoven with that of another. Upon that other, I lived dependent for all my impulses; when a shade alighted on her fair brow, I mourned; and when, she

smiled, I rejoiced. Rarely then, were any of my thoughts addressed to myself; I was too much engaged in considering the ways of affording her pleasure, and protecting her from pain.

Thus elapsed the first year after CEnone's arrival at our house. At this period, the cloud had almost entirely disappeared from her countenance; for, even the purest, and strongest grief has its term of duration. Where indeed, is the attribute of humanity which is permanent? When I shall have divulged all the passages which have occurred between me, and my father, it will be wondered how I could ever have attained the fortitude to discuss, and investigate his character, and actions, with the tranquillity I have exhibited. But, there is no feeling, sentiment, or passion, that may not be suspended, if not destroyed, by excessive indulgence. Such is mortal imperfection, that even *remorse* cannot always exist in equal vigor.

For many months, I laboured unsuccessfully

to engage my fair kinswoman, in a friendly, and cordial intercourse with me: she retired to her chamber, whenever she had the power; and seemed to prefer the freedom, and indulgencies of solitude, to all the sympathies, and zealous attentions, which I could devote to her. As however, the keenness of her grief decreased, she became familiarized to my assiduities; and at last, even appeared to derive from them, a certain degree of pleasure. But, I mean not to imply that, in the ingenuous manifestation of a sad, and spiritless approbation, there existed the slightest trace of aught, which even the most sanguine lover could have perverted into an indication of the return of his passion. She was frank, and kind, and, when her cheerfulness returned, cordial; but, she evinced not the smallest symptom of her heart containing the minutest germe of the feelings, which I most desired to excite in her.

While however, she was tacitly strengthening the attachment, and esteem of every body who

came in contact with her, especially, of my generous, and naturally affectionate sister, she was gradually, and proportionately losing the selfish inclination which my father had, at first entertained for her. Clearly, have I since been able to trace the whole progress and cause of this change in his opinions; but, at the period of their occurrence, I was too much occupied by the object of them, to even think of devoting my observation to him.

When she had first arrived at our abode, it is now evident to me, that he had fancied he had secured a useful, and intelligent assistant in the prosecution of his peculiar pursuits; one, who being entirely dependent upon him for a home, and for subsistence, would, both from feelings of gratitude, and self-interest, be most zealous, and particular in her services. In the first place however, in contradiction to these conjectures, he discovered that his supposed destitute kinswoman inherited a considerable revenue, and that she required that he should

annually receive a certain portion of it, as a remuneration for his hospitality. Now, my father, notwithstanding his great wealth, was by no means devoid of an affection to money; but, he would have preferred to the possession of it, in this instance, that claim upon her subser-
viency, which an eleemosynary support of her, would have afforded a selfish, indelicate, and unfeeling mind. This, therefore was his first disappointment. Still however, probably, he hoped that, in spite of her independence, her natural sweetness, and docility, and a certain degree of gratitude, would instigate her to tender him alacriously that servile, and exclusive homage, and attention, which both his vanity, and his egotism equally required; and, in this supposition, he continued to manifest to her, the courtesy, and conciliation, he had assumed upon her first arrival. But soon, to his infinite chagrin, he found that, instead of the zealous devotion to him of her time and thoughts, which he had fondly expected, she

remained, during many successive months, secreted in her chamber, indulging her dejection of spirit, and her recollections of an affectionate and conscientious parent; and worse still, that she paid him, when they encountered, little more court, or deference, than she accorded to the insignificance of his contemned children. In this conduct of hers, originated his second disappointment. But, what must have been his feelings, when he discovered that, as her grief departed, and her spirits revived, instead of even then, making reparation for her previous neglect, and offences, by attaching herself exclusively to him, she was so indiscriminating, so blind, and so perverse, as to prefer to pass almost her whole time, in my company, or in that of my sister; constantly riding, and walking with the one, or conversing, or performing on the organ, with the other: all smiling, jesting, and amusing themselves without demanding either his sanction, or participation; deriving their pleasures from their own resources, and

malapertly daring to be happy, although his concurrence, or permission had never even been solicited !

From this moment, I am now convinced that he regarded his innocent, and unconscious niece, with all the malice and antipathy of which his apathetic nature was capable; though, at the period to which I am alluding, he only manifested it by the substitution of his habitual phlegm and coldness of manner, for the degree of warmth, and kindness, which he had originally assumed in his intercourse with her.

Little however suspecting the existence of the storm that was impending over our devoted heads, we pursued our thoughtless career of happiness. Oenone had now completely accustomed herself to the company of myself, and my sister; and we formed an almost inseparable society. Her conversation abounded in interest and in instruction for us, in comparison with whom; she might be said to be consummately skilled in the knowledge of the great

world ; and there was a novelty in her thoughts, and a grace, and a truth, in their expression, that might have fascinated judges far more proficient, and fastidious, than her partial auditors. She possessed besides, a rectitude, a simplicity, a natural love of the good, and the beautiful, and a strong, yet apparently almost unconscious determination never to wander wilfully into the path of error, which influenced all she said, and did ; and imparted an additional charm to the lightest phrase, or the least important action. She was too, the most perfectly humane person I ever encountered ; and willingly would she have endured any inconvenience, rather than have exposed herself to the risk of injuring even the minutest insect.

Poetry, general literature, painting, sculpture, and conjectures on the nature of the life, and the pursuits we should lead, and follow, if we possessed an unlimited power of indulging our inclinations, formed some of the frequent subjects of our conversations. She was eminently

proficient in the knowledge of the works of ancient art; and consequently, one of my principal pleasures was to accompany her through the apartments of my father, whenever he was absent, and meditate with her, on the transcendent statues, and relicks of antiquity, which they contained.

One day, when engaged in this delightful occupation, I directed her attention to the picture of Medusa; and as usual became so excited by my observation of it, that I pourtrayed vividly, and with some degree of eloquence, my strong sense of its extraordinary excellence. She gazed at me with surprise, and demanded whether I was serious in my admiration; adding that she had never before looked upon so fell a countenance, one which so completely embodied the spirit of all that was most foul, and atrocious. I replied that I could not declare myself more literally, or with greater sincerity; that I regarded the object of her animated reprobation, as the very highest achievement of

human art; that I loved it, that I adored it; and would make almost any sacrifice to acquire a similar beauty of feature, and grandeur of aspect.

“Would it not be glorious, entrancing,” I continued, “to be endowed with a countenance which all must admire, but all must fear, which should have the power of withering, blasting the beholder, and of creating in his breast every inimical passion, save one,—*scorn*; for, I defy the haughtiest, and most disdainful mortal that ever drew breath, to entertain this sentiment, for the possessor of that superb and awful face, that incomprehensible combination of physical perfection, and stupendous moral depravity. Would it not, I repeat, be glorious, and god-like, to stalk through the world, alone in might, and majesty, and see one’s adversaries hurled to the earth, writhing, agonized, even by a look!”

I expressed myself energetically; and I felt my forehead glow as I pourtrayed the image,

which the weakness of my heart desired to realize.

“Godlike!” she repeated with strong emphasis, “*fiend-like* is my sentence. And for that wish of yours,” she continued with almost equal warmth, “you deserve to be subjected for the rest of your life, to a communion with the demon, that must have haunted the unfortunate sculptor who achieved this too accurate representation; for, never could mortal man have *imagined* a personification of a wickedness so detestable, so monstrous, so unearthly!”

I smiled; I even derived a secret pleasure from having excited her into such unusual energy; she looked like a Pythia delivering an oracle, her eye was so animated, and her cheek so flushed: but, her speech left a disagreeable impression upon me, which I could not banish during the remainder of the day: and it involuntarily recurred to me, in many a subsequent hour of painful reflection, and contrition.

I conducted her into another room; and I

exhibited to her, the statue of Cupid tormenting Psyche; but, I uttered no encomium; I was not desirous to elicit from her so speedily another monitory rebuke. After however, having regarded it for a moment, she said, with a smile, in which there was much of gravity, at the same time looking poringly into my face,

“ And this, I suppose, is another of the subjects of your singularly *humane* admiration ? ”

I felt ashamed to shrink from an avowal of the sentiments I entertained; and I replied affirmatively, but, with a boldness less real, than assumed.

“ I think,” she rejoined, half jocosely, half seriously, “ most gifted, and most gentle kinsman, you would act judiciously, if you were to offer your services to the Inquisition, in the capacity of assistant official. You would then be in your sphere; and who can say what vast improvements so illustrious a genius as yours might not effect in the ‘godlike’ art of Torture ? How unfortunate that you did not live some

fifteen centuries ago—what an inestimable gladiator you would have made!"

As she concluded, there was more playfulness, and raillery in her tone, than seriousness. I made no answer; and, in a few moments, our conversation found another, and to me, more agreeable theme.

It is impossible for any, but those who have loved as passionately, and as really as I, to imagine the pleasure I derived from displaying to the object of my idolatry, all the haunts, habits, and occupations of my earliest years. No country on earth could be more incongenial to the nature of the sentiments I entertained, and to those with which I sought to inspire her, than that, which surrounded us. Rocky, desert, and sterile to excess, yet, it contained not one feature of romance, or grandeur, or dignity: all was mean, dreary, gloomy, and dejecting. But, had it been another Hybla, I could not have experienced a greater gratification than I felt in introducing her to all its

dark spots, and nooks; in exploring with her its dullest glens, and chasms; and in relating to her, all the anecdotes of my infancy:—that here, I fell a dozen feet in seeking a vulture's egg; that there, one memorable night, I first saw a wolf, and was obliged, to the sanguinary destruction of my fingers, and limbs, to ascend an almost perpendicular rock, to escape from his savage pursuit: and that yonder blasted stump, I remembered a tall, and stately pine, and was standing within a scanty score of yards from its trunk, on the very eve when the vast mass was hurled by the lightning to the earth.

To all these egotistical recurrences to the days of my boyhood and youth, *Œnone* used to sit and listen with the most generous patience, and attention; and seemed even to derive a sympathetic pleasure from the satisfaction which I experienced in constituting myself the subject of all my own narrations. Then, I would arise, and conduct her to another spot; and there commence a new relation, to which she

would resign herself with an undiminished lenity.

In all these walks, and wanderings, my sister generally accompanied us, but, invariably, the fawn. This animal I loved so dearly, that I was nearly committing the desecration of saying, that I loved it almost as well as its mistress. I never tired of dallying with it, of watching its graceful gambols, and of encouraging it by my voice and gestures, to exhibit its wonderful activity. It was my passion ; I would suffer it to sleep for hours in my arms ; deck it continually with the choicest flowers I could procure ; and never permit any body but myself to feed it. I taught it a thousand winning, and fantastic tricks : it would obey my slightest action ; place itself in the most endearing, and beautiful attitudes ; look, and move, as though it were possessed of a human intellect—do all, but speak.

One day, when we were walking in the vicinity of the mines, a large, fierce dog sprang

so rapidly, and suddenly, from its concealment behind a fragment of rock, that, fleet as was the poor fawn, it could not avoid its savage assailant. The brute fixed his sharp fangs in its slender neck, and instantly the blood spouted forth. At this spectacle, *my* blood fired as instantaneously. I was, unluckily, sufficiently far from the spot of its occurrence, to be unable to attain it immediately; but, the ground being covered with large stones, and fragments of granite, I seized the weightiest within my reach, and hurled it at the ferocious beast. It struck, and almost crushed him; and, relinquishing his hold upon his victim, he fled howling violently. But, as I have said, my blood was boiling, and I resolved that the brute should not escape without still farther punishment. In spite therefore, of the intreaties and intercessions of my affrighted cousin, I followed him rapidly even to the mouth of one of the mines. There, another of my missiles attained him, and probably frac-

tured one of his limbs, for he sank suddenly on the ground, uttering yells still louder, and more prolonged. Redoubling my speed, in an instant, I arrived within reach of him; when, seizing his back, with both my hands, I raised his vast bulk in the air, to the full extent of my height, then, dashed him, with the utmost exertion of my great strength, upon the earth. The brute struck, with a dull sound, on the stony soil, heavily rebounded, palpitated for a moment, protruded his long tongue, and then, with one general convulsion of his huge, and hideous carcase, expired.

Ere however, life had quite departed, the enraged voice of a man addressing to me the most contumelious, and irritating epithets, attracted my attention. I gazed in the direction of the sound, and discovered a miner slowly ascending in the mouth of the mine. At this instant, only his head was visible, and judging from his infuriated looks, and insulting expressions, he was impatiently awaiting the moment

when the machinery that sustained him, should have reached a level that would enable him to leap upon the earth, and inflict an adequate retribution upon the destroyer of his dog.

While I was regarding him with a ferocity equal to his own, and eagerly expecting his attack, for, all my bad passions were still actively at work within me, *Œnone*, who had overtaken me, foreseeing the strife to which I was about to be exposed, grasped me by the arm, and, with much agitation, implored me to immediately withdraw with her. Finding me however, inflexible, and observing the huge bulk of my adversary, which every rotation of the windlass rendered more conspicuous, she made one last effort to induce my compliance, by attempting to pique my pride into a co-operation with her intercessions: asking me tauntingly, whether I, a gentleman, nobly born, the son, and heir of wealth, and rank, could yet act so ignominiously, as voluntarily to enter into a fray with a mere ruffian, a being

evidently scarcely elevated above the grade of the brute animal I had slain? But, in my present mood, even her intreaties were unavailing; and emancipating myself from her grasp, I flew to meet the colossus, who had just alighted on the earth; and, towering in his height, and strength, stood apparently resolved to immolate me, as an appeasement to his wrath, and to the manes of the beast, I had destroyed.

Not more than one second however, endured our conflict; for, raging with passion, I flew at him with the speed of lightning, and the fury of a ravenous beast of prey; and, before he could even prepare for his defence, drove my clenched hand into his face, with a force so irresistible that, staggering beneath it, and retreating a pace, or two, to recover his balance, he fell headlong into the abyss behind him. I felt assured that he was dashed into atoms, and approached the mouth, in obedience to a mechanical impulse, rather than in an expectation

of discerning any trace of him. But, to my surprise, I discovered that he had clung to the bucket, which he had overtaken in his more rapid descent, and was suspended vacillatingly, only a few yards beneath the spot whereon I stood. As soon as he gained his equilibrium, he threatened me vehemently with both his arm, and his voice. Seizing a huge fragment of rock, for a moment, I doubted, in spite of the terrified expostulations of *Œnone*, whether I should not at once put an end to both his speech, and his life. But, while I hesitated, he disappeared in the gloom of the vast abyss; for, those who regulated the motion of the machine that sustained him, were far too many hundred feet below the surface of the earth, to hear even his turbulent cries, to raise, instead of lower him.

When I had withdrawn to some short distance from the scene of the fray, and the source of my excitement had been entirely removed, I confess that I could not refrain

from feeling somewhat surprised at the strange, wild pleasure I had derived from the indulgence of the savage fury I had experienced. At this moment, however, I became sensible of the trembling of my gentle cousin's hand, as it rested on my arm; and my thoughts were immediately directed into another channel. She was pale, and agitated; and the poor fawn, the innocent source of all the turmoil, trotted tremblingly by her side, and looked every moment wistfully in her face, as though even in the midst of his own terrors, and griefs, he still was conscious of those of his mistress. I raised the fond animal in my arms, and attempted to dissipate *Œnone's* agitation, and to divert her mind from the recollection of the strife, by directing her attention to her favourite. I carried it, until we reached a spring; and there, while I was engaged in washing the now stiffened blood from its wound, my fair and fluttered companion gradually recovered her serenity. But, her vivacity did not return

to her ; and when we arrived at our home, she was still taciturn, and depressed.

As I entered the gate, one of the servants put a letter into my hand ; a glance at the superscription informed me that it was from my father. I opened it with some degree of nervous anxiety ; for, though I entertained no particular cause of apprehension, I always possessed a latent consciousness that it was in his power, and perhaps, in his inclination, to afflict me most severely ; but, it only contained intelligence that was very far from being disagreeable to me. It was couched in his usual, cold, phlegmatic style ; it commenced, “ Son,” and it was subscribed, “ Your Father :” and it stated, in a couple of lines, that he had been compelled to repair to the metropolis, whence, probably, he should not return, for several weeks ; and that he expected me to live decorously during his absence.

The preparations for the journey he had executed, and arranged with so much secrecy,

that he was not only able to commence it, without my entertainment of the least suspicion of his intention, but even without the privity of my sister, who was in the house, at the very moment of his departure. I relate this trifling circumstance, because it will tend to convey a still more ample idea of the supererogatory uncommunicativeness, and covertness of his disposition.

In what cause, or with what object, this sudden whim originated, I entertained no conception, nor did I impose upon my mind the bootless task of attempting to discover an explanation; but, more wisely contented myself with rejoicing in the result. I felt as one, who having lived during many years in the genial climate of a fertile and beautiful valley, whereof the only imperfection was its luckless proximity to a gigantic mountain of ice, which occasionally cast a deadly chill around the hearts of all within its influence, might be supposed to feel, were this baneful source of discomfort,

and depression, this only misfortune of a life otherwise supremely happy, suddenly removed. These were the sentiments I entertained; and I retired to indulge them in solitude.

I found that my father had locked, and removed the keys from, all the apartments containing his principal treasures. One of them however, an antechamber, was open; and I entered it, and throwing myself on a chair, abandoned myself to my reflections.

This room, he had evidently but recently quitted. Upon the table, by the side of a microscope, impaled upon a needle, was an insect, in which life was not yet extinguished. Without any distinct perception, or consciousness, my eye occasionally apparently watched the dying struggles of its mortal agony; and then glanced to the lens of the microscope, beneath which, lay a few drops of water, wherein, by the power of the instrument, was exhibited the spectacle of the larger animalcula attacking and devouring the less. In these two dignified,

and humane occupations, scarcely unworthy of the pampered refinement of a Domitian, did I seem to be recreating; but, in reality, my mind was wholly engrossed by far different thoughts.

At this moment, a hand was gently laid on my shoulder, and my name was softly uttered by a musical, and a familiar voice.

I turned, and beheld my cousin, who unperceived by me, had entered the room, and adopted this mode of interrupting my meditations.

“ I fear,” she said gravely, and almost sadly, but mildly, “ that you possess a disposition which is not altogether averse from the love of cruelty, and its practices.”

Strange, but true is it, and most characteristic of my nature, that her imputation to me, of a quality generally considered so odious, and which, by the many, would be disclaimed with anxiety, and indignation, equally whether the charge were just, or false, occasioned me

not the least feeling of annoyance: I seemed to be incapable of understanding that cruelty was a vice. But, that sympathy, and regret, which the matter of her rebuke could not create, the tone, and manner of it, effectually achieved. I saw that she was sad; and whether she did, or did not possess a rational, and sufficient cause for her distress, was little material to me. I regarded only the result; and my anxious looks instantly expressed to her, the strongest affection, and interest. Before however, I could clothe my sentiments in words, she resumed her gentle admonition.

“ I have been reflecting,” she said, “ on the incidents of this morning; and I cannot conceal from myself, that you are disposed to be irascible, and I fear, I must also add, fierce, and resentful. Indeed, your present occupation, if I were inclined to judge you with severity, might, I regret to confess, justify me in attaching to you a still more reproachful epithet.—Do not interrupt me, I beseech you:

were I less interested in your welfare, I never should have undertaken a task so ungracious as that of reproof. Array before yourself then, the motives by which I am instigated, and, in consideration of the value, little as it may be, that is their due, grant me a patient hearing. You know not how fervently I desire to be of service to you; the seeds, and fruits of good are within you, I am assured; but, do not feel moodily to me, if I add, that they are mingled with many tares. Willingly, eagerly, would I aid you, in separating the corn from the chaff, the pure gold from the ore; for, none, believe me, would more lament, were you to be benighted in this pilgrimage; or, perhaps, half so much rejoice, *exult*, I may say, were you to follow, undeviatingly, gloriously, the path of rectitude even to the end. You can plead, I am well aware, many an extenuating circumstance in mitigation of the censure your errors deserve; but, you can offer no justification. Your youth has been guiltily neglected by those, who ought

to have superintended, if not undertaken, its instruction ; neither moral, nor religious truths have been instilled into you, and the consequence of these omissions is, that you sometimes appear to me, to want even the faculty of distinguishing the right from the wrong. It is my consciousness of the injustice which has been done to you, and my belief in your possession of many noble qualities that have originated in me the strong feelings of interest, and friendship, with which I regard you. But, think not that I am inculcating the doctrine of filial rebellion : *you* have not the less a duty to perform, because your father has disregarded *his*. At the moment of your birth, a mutual compact was imposed upon you by Nature ; and *his* violation does not exonerate you from the obligation of fulfilling strictly, and honestly, your portion of it ; any more than misconduct in you, would have justified him in retorting by a similar course : for, the bond, I repeat, between the child, and the parent, is

of heaven's ordination, and is only dissoluble by the revocation of the life it gave. This, is my creed; and I solemnly declare to you, that I preach no more than I feel myself capable of practising, had the Almighty ordained that I should have been subjected to your trial."

She paused; and then added, with less grave impressiveness, but with equal animation,

"I have discussed this painful theme, because I wished to prove to you that, in my estimate of your disposition, I have given you the full benefit of every circumstance which could operate to your advantage: yet, though I have held the balance with a partial hand, suffer me to say, you have been weighed, and are found wanting. Let me implore you then, to search narrowly in your heart, and if you find a vice, to pluck it out, and cast it from you. Would that I could remove the film from your eyes, and make you clearly see the right, and the wrong! If you then, did not love Virtue for its intrinsic beauty, and divinity alone, the wisdom of self-interest would prompt you to offer your whole

homage to a Power, that repays its votaries even a hundred fold. Listen, I conjure you, to the feeble advice I have offered you; for believe me, I entertain for you more than the feelings of a *friend*."

I started; and my looks expressed an interest which could not be miscomprehended: C^En^On^e continued; "I repeat that I feel for you more than the feelings of a friend: let me be to you even as a *mother*, a fond, affectionate, loving mother; and your gratitude shall teach you to be to me,—*a dutiful son!*"

This speech instantaneously exterminated the hopes which the conclusion of the previous one, had as suddenly created. The word "*mother*" grated most painfully on my ears, and the displeasure it occasioned me, must have been very visibly depicted by my countenance; for C^En^On^e immediately added, with a faint smile, though her eyes were still glistening with the gentle dew which the previous excitement of her feelings had spread upon them,

"You will not then, accept me for a *mother*?

Well," she added with more gaiety, "I have performed what I conceived to have been my duty to my *son*, and what, if it prove productive of good to him, will constitute my greatest *pleasure*. And so now, bequeathing you my maternal blessing, I leave you to ponder upon the warning I have given you; and on the fates of Belshazzar, Cæsar, and all those who have arrogantly steeled their hearts against the adoption of that, which has been respectively conveyed to them, by some good genius like myself."

Then, with another radiant smile of exquisite gentleness, and benignity, and an affectionate, and playful gesture of adieu, she glided from the room; and left me to fulfil most literally, that portion of her advice which related to my consideration of the whole of it.

There were some phrases in this most disinterested, most charitable, and most beautiful exposition of her views of moral duties, and obligations, which, emanating from any other

earthly being, would have partaken far too much of the tone of monition, and censorship, to be otherwise than offensive to my vanity. But this was a feeling that could not have been called into action in my intercourse with *Œnone*; for, I never even dreamed of a rivalry with her. I should literally have been proud of my conscious inferiority, had I not, as I have before stated, feared that its existence, or rather, her perception of it, might prove an insuperable obstacle to my attainment of her affections. In recurring therefore to her admonition, no sentiment of pique intruded on my mind. One feeling, and that, a very different one, exclusively occupied me: Would she have addressed to me, this reproof at all, unless she loved me? Did not the very great reluctance which she admitted she had entertained to the fulfilment of the task which she supposed to be incumbent upon her, indicate that it could have been surmounted by no common incentive?— And what feeling but one, could have supplied

this incentive? With what other reason too, explain the extreme terror and sympathy she manifested during and after my contest with the miner? she, so serene, so difficult of excitement, so religiously resigned to all that might befall herself, so little disposed to the indulgence of merely personal, and selfish terrors.

These were the reflections that begot in me an indomitable desire of immediately determining my fate, by extracting from her an undisguised statement of the feelings she entertained for me. We had now resided together under the same roof, and in habits of constant intercourse, unseparated for a day, during a period of above eighteen months; yet, in all this time, never by a word, an equivocation, the shadow of an implication, an inflection of voice, or even by a glance, had I wilfully sought to intimate the love, that was within me. She had ceaselessly been a saint in my eyes; there was divinity in her very robe; the atmosphere that surrounded her was consecrate. All

that she touched, approached, even looked upon, acquired an irresistible charm, and sanctitude for me. The very current of air that her fairy form impelled upon me as she passed, created in me a thrill of idolatrous rapture ; and the irreverent possibility of attempting to manifest my passion in any actual shape, had never even entered into my imagination. I should as soon have thought of resolving to desecrate a church, or, to profane the holiest mysteries of our religion.

Many of the physiological productions of Nature are beautiful ; earth, sea, and sky are beautiful ; it is delightful to gaze on the rich verdant fields, on the vast expanse of the mysterious ocean, and on the bright, deep, glorious blue of a southern atmosphere, but the wide world concentrated in one thick essence of material beauty, could not offer to the admiration of him, who has an eye to see, a head to judge, and a heart to feel, an object so truly, purely, divinely beautiful, as a perfectly lovely and virtuous woman. This was the sentiment, which

I entertained habitually in the presence of **Œ**none; and I felt as she stood before me, in all her excellence of mind and form, breathing of heaven and its attributes, a radiant and glorious incarnation of their invisible being, that she alone, was *proof* of the existence of a creative Power, All-Wise, and All-Good.

After this confession of the extent of the reverence with which I regarded her, it may easily be conceived that I must have endured a violent struggle, before I could so far emancipate myself from my thraldom, as to resolve to give an unequivocal expression to my own sentiments, and to demand as unreserved an avowal of hers. This explanation I apprehended indescribably; but, I dreaded still more the continuation of suspense; and I resolved to hazard the termination of all my hopes, rather than exist another day in incertitude. The final consequence of these feelings and conflicts was, that I mentally entered into a solemn compact with myself, to fulfil that very evening, an in-

tention, which was at once the dearest wish, and the veriest terror of my heart.

I had been excited by the contest with the miner; I had been excited during the morning, by the communication of my father's departure; by the subsequent interview with my cousin; and still more, by the consciousness of the task which I had undertaken to perform. As the day progressed, this flutter of spirit increased; and ere the hour for our assembly at our final repast had arrived, the equilibrium of my nervous system was completely destroyed.

When I entered the apartment, CEnone and my sister were discussing the events of the morning; and the former was expressing an apprehension that, if my antagonist had recognised my person, I should but too probably be exposed to some serious danger by his resentment. This conjecture seemed to make a deep impression on my sister: and, in much alarm, she intreated me not to venture from the immediate vicinity of our abode, for two, or

three weeks ; until, it might be hoped that, our fray should be forgotten, or, at least, my enemy might be tired of ineffectually waiting for an opportunity of vengeance. But, with a graceless, and puerile assumption of audacity, which was peculiarly supererogatory in me, for none could have possessed a greater real fearlessness, I laughed at her apprehensions ; and asked her scornfully, whether she really thought that *now*, during the absence of our father, and keeper, when the gate was thrown open, that the bird instead of availing itself of its liberty, would impose upon itself additional chains, and spontaneously seek a still more narrow cage ?

This ironical supposition seemed to suddenly suggest a new train of thought to my sister ; and, after a moment's reflection, she said,

“ I have now lived twenty years, and I have never yet been as many miles from our own door. Let us pay a visit for a short period, to the possessor of the beautiful garden, and still more beautiful child, you have so often described

to me. We shall thus not only have the pleasure and benefit of a change of abode, but, the satisfaction of knowing that we are removing you out of the risk of danger."

I was delighted with this proposition ; appeal was then made to **Œ**none for her opinion of it ; she seemed as much pleased with it as myself : but, before she expressed her approbation, she said, she required to be informed whether we were assured, that my father would have sanctioned it, if he had been present ?—My sister and I, were sadly disconcerted by this question ; and hurriedly interchanged looks of similar perplexity. Neither of us chose to submit to the indignity of uttering a falsehood ; yet, both so much wished to execute a plan, from which each expected to derive a great, though probably very unequal pleasure, that we made a sort of compromise with our consciences ; and answered so evasively, and dwelt so much, and so volubly upon the danger whereto I was exposed in our present abode, and the safety which would

be secured to me by a removal, that our gentle kinswoman was literally confounded into a concurrence in our scheme. It was then, determined that we should depart on the following morning.

In this, and similar conversation, the evening passed, and the night advanced. Every moment, my spirit became more composed; and these few hours would have been among the happiest of my life, but for my recollection of the pledge which I had made to myself, to induce an explanation that very night. Repeatedly, I strove to summon the courage to give expression to my thoughts; but my heart failed me every time I made the attempt, and I was obliged to postpone it again, and again, in the mere apprehension of renewing my previous agitation. At length, I pacified my self-dissatisfaction by most religiously vowing that the first indication of C^Enone's departure from the apartment, should be the signal for my confession.

That moment arrived; she stood with a lamp

in her hand; she advanced towards the door. But I uttered not a word; my tongue cleaved to the roof of my parched mouth; and my limbs trembled so violently, that I could scarcely sustain myself. She had raised the latch; she was on the threshold; now, paused a moment to again bid us an affectionate farewell for the night; then, turned to withdraw. Still, however, I spoke not: my heart beat with an increased tumultuousness; my dry lips refused to articulate a sound; and I sank upon a chair, gasping for breath.

But, when the door had closed, and her form had totally disappeared, an indescribably painful feeling of self-discontent, and shame, burst upon me in a torrent, and in an excess, that were irresistible. I sprang to my feet, rushed to the door, darted up the stairs, and overtook her, on the summit. She turned with a look of surprise, occasioned by the impetuosity of my movements. Not however, an instant's reflection, or hesitation did I allow myself.

“Œnone,” I cried —

But, not another syllable could I articulate; and I stood speechlessly before her, panting with agitation. At this moment, my eye was attracted by the radiant whiteness of her hand, as it rested, illuminated by the full rays of her lamp, in strong and beautiful contrast on the dark oak of the balusters. Instantly I caught it in my grasp, that soft, fair, dear hand, and fervently impressed upon it, as though my whole soul had been contained in it, a passionate and thrilling kiss.

The moment wherein my cold, and moistureless lips came into contact with her warm and glowing flesh, a revolution was operated in my entire being, which it is impossible to describe with adequate force. It was more than electrical, more than magical; my whole nature seemed to be converted into flame; and I felt a burning heat encircling my heart, and urging my brain into the exaltation of insanity. The disordered blood leaped, fierce, and searching,

as molten lead, through my glowing veins; the element of fire environed me; it was within me, and without, and seemed to eat into the very marrow of my bones!—I panted for air, and, staggering beneath the sensation of incipient suffocation, cast from me roughly the fair hand I had hitherto retained, as though it had been a serpent of worse than African venom; then, sprang from the presence of the enchantress who had maddened me, with somewhat of the impetus, and not a little of the velocity, of an arrow from a bow, a bolt from an arbalist. An open door was before me; I darted into the room; and, upon a couch that stood in the centre of it, I flung myself in a delirium of rapture. Then, for a moment, I abandoned myself to the full power of my painful ecstacy; I tossed my arms into the air—I turned—I writhed—I raved—I shouted!

But, this indulgence, wild, and frantic as it was, was widely insufficient for the ebullition within me; the narrowness of the chamber

oppressed me; I seemed to be losing the capacity of respiration; and the possibility of remaining stationary, formed no longer a portion of my faculties. Forth from our gate, I rushed into the free air, and into the thick darkness of the night. Not a star glittered above me; and the wind drove in humid gusts into my face: but, I had neither sight, nor feeling for any external object. *My* world was within me; and onward I went with the fullest swiftness of my strength, I thought not, knew not, whither. All I demanded was, action! and, impelled by my frenzy, I pursued my headlong, and dangerous course over a country almost unparalleled in ruggedness, and inequality of surface; with the fury, and vehemence of gesticulation, which one may suppose to have been a characteristic of those unfortunate beings, whom the Scripture represents to have been “possessed with devils.”

Beneath the violence of this indulgence, and the profuse expenditure of bodily vigor, the

tornado of my mind quickly abated: and in no very many minutes I threw myself heavily upon the earth, completely exhausted, and subdued. Reason then returned to me; and a degree of languor, and inertness which would have been far from unpleasant in any other circumstances than those wherein I was placed, took entire and equal possession of both my moral, and physical faculties. But, in the present moment, I could have desired a very different disposition; for, when I proceeded to look around me, and make the most accurate observations which the darkness of the night would permit, I discovered that I had attained to a distance from my home, which was almost incredible, considering the time that I appeared to have occupied in my progress. Of the real extent however, of this period, I could form only a very imperfect estimate; for the immediate past possessed already in my retrospection all the uncertain character of a disturbed dream.

As most cautiously, I proceeded on my

weary return, I was astounded by the discovery of the acclivities I must have surmounted, the chasms I must have leaped, and the precipices, descended: impediments of so dangerous a nature, that, in my moments of sanity, with all my intrepidity, and all my activity, and the great assistance of day-light to boot, I should most probably have declined to encounter them. Nothing that I can add, can convey so complete an idea, as this fact, of the extent of the exaltation, and the phrenzy, which I had experienced.

At length, however, though frequently, I little expected the event, I reached my home in safety. My sensations of lassitude then became delicious to me; and, during the remainder of the night, I indulged myself in reflections on a convulsion, which was pleasure amounting to pain, in endurance, but, unalloyed bliss, in recurrence. And thus terminated the immediate effects of this wild, and memorable effervescence of the morbid sensibility of my nature.

The following morning was that, appointed

for the performance of our short journey. But, before it commenced, I sought, and found an opportunity of addressing CEnone, during the temporary absence of my sister. My mind was wrought to the highest state of tension and excitement; and I was resolved to make the present minute the crisis of my fate. Again, however, for an instant, I stood before her, rendered speechless by the magnitude of my apprehensions.

“ CEnone,” at last, I cried, “ *I love you* ;” and my whole soul seemed to me to discharge itself on this avowal.

She looked at me with interest, I almost thought with tenderness; but, without the slightest indication of surprise.

“ I know you do,” she replied calmly, mildly, and kindly; “ I have long known that you do ; discovered your inclination, perhaps, before you yourself suspected its existence. What however, did I tell you yesterday ? Did I not promise you, that I would be to you, as a *mother*—even

as a fond, and affectionate mother, and you should be my *son*, my dutiful *son*. Fie: you are foolish; you have spoken thoughtlessly, and inconsiderately; grant yourself time for reflection, and you will perceive, I am sure, your error, and offer me, I am equally certain, some most filial atonement for its commission."

A thousand violent and conflicting sentiments were excited in me, by the manner, as well as by the matter, of this reply. Its bantering tone aroused feelings of indignation, and its implied disapprobation of my acknowledgment, engendered disappointment, and bitterness. Yet still, a general air of kindness pervaded it; and, though she was very far from replying to my passion, she did not positively, and expressly reject it; the discouragement was solely negative, and indirect. Her looks too, were so affable, so bland, so devoid of all tincture of censure, and dissatisfaction, that I could not willingly persuade myself that her heart entirely acknowledged the feelings she was expressing.

With these mitigant reflections, powerfully united the habitual sentiments of respect, and reverence which I had so long entertained for her; and the consequence of this hasty balance and examination of the hope, and the fear, the sweet and the bitter, which might be extracted from her discourse, was, that I replied with more sorrow, and passion, than anger,

“Œnone, why this severity? You, that are the very personification of charity, and tenderness, that would not willingly injure the smallest insect, why trifle with the feelings of a sensitive man? Why practise towards him alone, who entertains for you, far more affection than all the rest of the world united, the very extremity of cruelty? Œnone, answer me, I conjure you: do you love me?”

But not a manifestation of a change occurred in her beautiful countenance; with the same placid expression of gentle satisfaction, the same arch, but tempered vivacity in her sparkling eye, and precisely a similar tone, she replied;

“ I am nearly nine years older than you; and when I choose a father confessor, I promise you, that he shall be a little less juvenile, and somewhat more reverend, than you, my dear child. Until, therefore, you shall have attained an age rather more staid, and respectable, than your present, you must permit me to decline to answer your question. But, you wrong me, by your accusation of cruelty: and, what is more, *you* yourself *know* that you have imputed to me a crime which I hold in abhorrence; and that the conduct which I am pursuing towards you, solely originates in the very contrary sentiments. You are, I repeat, a child and a sciolist; and I wish to teach you a knowledge of yourself, and others; of both whereof you are ignorant, though with the sanguine character of your years, and temper, you ingenuously believe yourself to be intuitively endowed with that judgment and power of discrimination, which can only be attained by reflection, the experience of error, and of the fallibility of early

and undisciplined opinions. And yet, forsooth, I know not why I should thus address you ; for I will venture to affirm that all this good advice is making not the slightest impression upon you; and that there, as you stand before me, decorously listening, with apparent obedience, yet in the hardness and unconviction of your heart, you are still as resolute as ever to make oath, and declare, that you are passionately, despairingly, dyingly in love !—Why, even the candidates for admission into the order of chivalry used to be subjected to a long period of probation ; they watched, they toiled, they fasted, they did religious penance, they underwent inflictions of mind and body, before they were deemed worthy of receiving the spurs. And surely, you will admit that love is a pursuit of somewhat more importance, and dignity, than war ? Yet, every foolish boy esteems himself a proficient in the glorious science, within a dozen years after his escape from the cradle !—Come—I will form a compact with you : Behave

well; conduct yourself discreetly; exhibit a steady desire for improvement, and I will condescend to appoint you my squire, and strenuously exert my humble, yet best abilities, in attempting to instruct you, not in the art of breaking either lances, or hearts, but in the more difficult, and far more profitable one, of understanding yourself, and others."

How strange, how weak a guide, how unstable a reliance is the human heart! Ere *Œnone* had concluded her reply, a sudden, violent, and entire revolution had occurred within me. Instead of being additionally exasperated by this deliberate repetition of the playful raillery which had previously so much offended me, I was abashed by the tone of supremacy she assumed; by her serenity, her perfect composure, the utter absence of all manifestation of any feelings respondent to those which I entertained. As she proceeded, I grew ashamed of my youthfulness; I looked upon it as a detraction from my value, almost as a disgrace; and, mentally execrating it, in the

bitterness of my heart, I longed as much for an addition to my years, as the majority of mortals pine for a diminution. I stood before her oppressed, and humbled, by this strong and obtrusive sense of my detested juvenility; and I experienced sensations as ignoble and as puerile as those, which may be supposed to be entertained by a consciously guilty boy subjected to the public rebuke of an abused, and lenient tutor. Like to this petty delinquent, I seemed to myself to have been convicted of the perpetration of some sorry, humiliating fault; and I entertained a sort of confused feeling of obligation to *my* reprobation, for not having more fully availed herself of her strength, and literally, annihilated me for my presumption. I was cowed, dejected, contrite; and was hastily meditating an attempt to direct the conversation into another channel, when, *Œ*none gathering I suppose, from my looks, the discomfort, and confusion of my mind, kindly forestalled my intention.

“Have you,” she said, “reflected on the

lecture, which I read to you yesterday, and are you self-convicted of an inclination to cruelty? —I hope you purpose to benefit by my admonition."

I cannot express how grateful I felt to her, for this leniency to me, in my state of evident and utter prostration. I experienced a sensation of relief, as though I had just effected an escape from some impending, and fearful degradation; and I answered her questions with an eagerness, a volubility and a pertinacity of digression that speedily conducted us as far even as *I* could desire, from our previous theme. Thus, with a striking, but no uncommon extent of inconsistency, I felt my spirits elated, and my gratitude, and my attachment to her, if possible increased, by her abrupt dismission of the very subject which during many months, I had literally been pining to introduce.

While I was explaining to her how greatly she had miscomprehended the nature of my reflections, when she supposed me to have been

engaged in watching an insect's agony, my sister entered the room; and, the preparations having been completed, we commenced our journey.

I was, as I have said, in the highest spirits; the day was beautiful; the air, exquisitely soft, and fragrant; and, as our horses bore us rapidly against its balmy current, my feelings of exhilaration even increased. CEnone rode most skilfully, and gracefully; the color gradually mounted in her cheek; a gentle smile grew on her lovely mouth, and occasionally revealed a glimpse of the dazzling treasures within it: her brilliant eyes still more radiantly sparkled under the genial influence of the inspiriting exertion; the rich clusters of her dark tresses danced in the breeze; and the proud feathers in her hat yielded to it, until they lay in picturesque subjection on her shoulder. I gazed upon the beautiful picture she presented, with exulting admiration; and insensibly abandoned myself to the rapturous thoughts which the

contemplation of her loveliness never failed to excite in me.

Perhaps, I appreciated her remarkable perfection of form, and feature, with the greater keenness, because I possessed a degree of fastidiousness respecting female personal appearance, that can scarcely be supposed to have existed in one so young, and so little cultivated; a proof that this quality, if generally the growth of art, and of communion with the refined, is yet, occasionally, the gift of Nature. During my subsequent life, this feeling increased to such an extent, that a physical defect of any kind, in a woman, became an insurmountable barrier to my admiration: I considered not how many charms she might possess, if she had but one fault, I never could conceal it from my eyes, or divest myself of the consciousness of its existence. The *mind* of an ugly woman must ever have been a *terra incognita* to me: the aspect of the fane always effectually debarred me from a knowledge of the shrine; and though

I have sometimes honestly tried, I have ever invariably failed, to acquire the courage to approach sufficiently close to investigate it.

None however, of these dainty whimsies, exaggerated and sensitive as they were, were destined to be mortified by Cœnone. Hers, was one of those rare faces, that bid defiance to the sun, as well as to the taper; that not only seem divinely beautiful in the imperfect strength of an artificial light, but, in the fullest, and most powerful glare of day, instead of revealing a deficiency, only manifest an increased pretension to perfection. In short, hers was a countenance, the briefest sight whereof might have incited the most savage misanthrope into a temporary good humour with his species; and the equal of which, one might not encounter during the pilgrimage of a long life. It was, too, a library of intellect; and *I* was the student that never tired of perusing it, whether by science' sickly lamp, or by the more probing light of nature.

But this recollection of her remarkable personal charms has entrapped me into a digression, which I must now relinquish, and return to my narrative.

When we arrived at the place of our destination, we found our host prepared to receive us, and to afford us the best accommodation of his ample and beautiful cottage; my thoughtful sister having had the precaution to despatch a messenger to forewarn him of our intention of visiting, and probably of residing with him, for some time. The pretty Ianthe, and his younger daughter, were also present, and ready with their smiles to welcome us. The elder of these two fair children particularly excited the admiration of CEnone; she was a laughter-loving, frolicksome, gentle, affectionate girl buoyant with youth, health, and happiness.

The first object to which I directed the steps of my companions was the garden; that spot which, in my earlier days, had originally familiarized me to the perfectly fascinating charms

that may be produced by a judicious combination of nature, and art, and had consequently made an indelible impression on my mind. I conducted them through every portion of it; indicated to them, and expatiated upon, all the spots which were most worthy of admiration; and derived quite a puerile pleasure from this exhibition of my entire knowledge of even the least prominent parts of the locality. OEnone and my sister were delighted with all they saw; the real beauty whereof was infinitely enhanced by its utter, and most impressive contrast to the gloomy scene we had left behind us. Indeed, none but those who have continuously resided during many months in some such lair as ours, can imagine the gratification we derived from our sudden transportation to this smiling and halcyon spot; where, instead of a ceaseless environ of the stern, the ignoble, and the sterile, Nature never showed herself but in her sylvan, and holiday garb.

Into every nook, every hidden corner and

quarter we penetrated ; not a secret recess did we leave unexplored ; grottoes, thickets, abandoned walks, overgrown with tangled trees, neglected bowers inaccessible to graver, and less inquisitive adventurers ; and even into a cavern glittering with stalactites, and rendered so slippery by the exudations from its roof, that we could scarcely make a step without a fall. Quickly however, leaving this to us, most mirthful, but, most unstable spot, we sought a scene of surer footing. Then, we jointly put our powers of fleetness to the trial ; and the combined grace, and speed, which *Œnone* manifested in this gay and friendly strife, surprised even me who was inclined to give her credit for the amplest possession of every personal attraction ; but, had never before seen her so completely depose her habitual sedateness, and assume the buoyancy of the huntress nymph of old, with buskined leg begemmed with dew. Our spirits had reached the acme of elasticity ; we sported, we jested, we laughed, we sang.

At length, the moment of exhaustion arrived ; and then, with a tacit, but evidently general, consent, we seated ourselves on the soft, and verdant turf, in one of the most beautiful parts of the garden. Here, we panted for a time in silence ; the *four* children,—for, it is but just that I should apply to Cœnone, and my sister, a denomination, which they had honestly merited by their exertions,—so completely prostrated by their fatigue, they had not even the strength to speak ; and consequently, I, as mutely occupied myself in contemplating that one of them, whose presence would always have rendered a crowd invisible to me, and, in the midst of a galaxy, appeared a solitary star.

We were resting in that quarter of the garden, where the flowers were most plentiful : we were literally surrounded by them ; and the scent was divine. The air was laden with sweets, was luscious, and heavy with fragrance ; and I could almost fancy that I saw it deposit at Cœnone's feet, the burthen it was incapable of

sustaining. Plucking several of the most beautiful roses, I presented them to her, with gay, and mimic deference. At this sight, Ianthe, and her sister, who were at that period of life, when the total subjugation of the physical frame by exertion, is almost impossible, and having Antœus-like, derived fresh vigor from their contact with their mother earth, arose to occupy themselves by following my example. In a few minutes, they returned laden with the choicest flowers, some of which they cast into her lap, and deposited the others in a pile at her feet: a proceeding which suggested to me, a new source of pastime; and I said,

“ Five of us are here assembled, a republic without a chief, a species of political institution which never has existed, and never can exist. Even in its most liberal days, Rome had its consuls; and Athens, in the height of its pride and power, was little better than an oligarchy. Even Sparta, stern, iron-monied, iron-hearted, Sparta, had its kings, and more powerful still, its ephori. And shall we then, miserable

moderns, reject all the most illustrious examples of antiquity? I see by your looks, that you entertain an opinion similar to my own; and propose therefore, that we immediately elect a sovereign: my suffrage is, for my fair kinswoman, the noble lady CEnone."

The delighted children affirmatively clapped their hands; my sister smiled.

"There is," I continued, "evidently, no necessity for demanding either the sentiments or the votes of the present august conclave; I perceive that my proposition is gratefully adopted: carried unanimously, without a division, and with acclamations. Raise then your voices, ye little ones, prostrate your bodies, and offer homage to your queen."

Both the fair and docile objects of my mandate, immediately threw themselves on their knees, and shouted, "CEnone! CEnone!"

As soon as I had roughly twisted a few flowers into the form of a wreath, I also bent my knee: and said,

“ Where honor is due, let honor be paid, and freely, and appropriately. To the victor we offer laurel; to the poet, myrtle; to the mourner, bay; and to the lady a coronet of characteristic flowers. The rose is the type of her cheek; the water-lily, of her brow; the blue anemone, of her eye; the honeysuckle, of her fragrance; the primrose, of her humility; the heliotrope, of her affection; the briar, of her virtue; and the rosemary, the bell, and the violet, of her fidelity. Receive then from me, your unworthy subject, most gracious sovereign, this, your crown, the achievement of no merely mortal art, but of nature’s own choicest, and express fabrication: receive it, gentle lady, as at once an emblem of your own perfections, and as an indication of the homage, and fealty of your faithful, and devoted liegeman. . And now, hear me vow, in my own name, and in that of the remainder of your assembled subjects, to accept you as our queen, and our goddess; we will be renegades to our faith; and

we would cheerfully consecrate to you, an altar of the whitest, the most spotless, and the *hardest* marble, as a symbol of your purity, and insensibility, but, lacking the materials, we must at present substitute flowers. Shout then again, ye little ones, and raise your voices to the honor of the Flora of the garden ! the queen of beauty, roses, smiles, and ” —

But Oenone interrupted me.

“ No !—not, of *love*,” she said archly, and significantly.

My spirits, however, were then far too elate to be checked by this recurrence to the discomfiture of the morning.

“ This is too insolent and ungrateful,” I mirthfully replied, “ and you richly deserve that we should convert the very tokens of our admiration and homage, into implements of vengeance. Aid me then, my fellow subjects,” I added, turning to my sister, and the two children, “ in redressing the wrongs of your leader, and let us teach this scornful beauty,

and ungrateful queen, that an injured people can punish her, even with the sweets it had procured for her."

Thus saying, with affected indignation I cast at her a large handful of flowers; and *Œnone*, who at the moment was sitting on the turf, laughingly threw herself back upon it, and raised her hands in pretended apprehension of my fragrant missiles. But, they all alighted upon her: and the two children, seeing that she was partially covered with them, in the spirit of imitation, flung upon her an additional quantity. My sister was directly seized with the prevailing mania of the moment; and suddenly, we were all zealously engaged in ascertaining which could be most forward in heaping flowers upon *Œnone*; a whim which we pursued until the whole of her fair form and face had disappeared from our eyes, and she was completely entombed beneath the large pile which we had previously collected. We then sat down, to admire at our leisure, the work of our hands.

Several minutes elapsed; the heap that we watched, was perfectly motionless; a few more brief moments I allowed to pass, yet still not a flower was stirred. At last, somewhat surprised by CEnone's silence, and passiveness, I said,

“Are you refractory? are you rebellious? Will you not acknowledge the justice of your sentence? Confess your guilt, and we will immediately arise, and release you.”

But, no reply was returned; nor was there the slightest change perceptible in the situation of the lightest flower.

Then slightly, yet almost unconsciously alarmed, I said quickly and anxiously, “CEnone, this conduct is foolish. Why do you not answer me?”

Seriously terrified by this continued silence, I sprang from my seat, and hastily dashed away the flowers that covered her, and then—oh God, a spectacle so utterly unexpected, so appalling, presented itself to my horror-stricken gaze, that the first shock and agony of that

moment can never be effaced from my memory !

Œnone, she, on whose countenance but a seeming instant before, with the fondest delight I had seen beaming the brightest hues of health and happiness, now lay before me, in the perfect and fearful semblance of death. Her face was paler than the palest marble ; and her beautifully sculptured features seemed suddenly to have acquired an almost equal rigidity. Such indeed, was the mortal character of her stupor, that I should have deemed the vital spark extinct, had I not observed the large tears forcing their way in quick succession from beneath her closed lids. This symptom of vitality was not lost upon me ; and, in an agony of hope, and apprehension, I attempted to rouse her from her insensibility.

“ Œnone, dearest Œnone,” I cried, and I pressed her passionately in my arms, “ speak to me, I implore, adjure you !”

She opened her glistening eyes : looked affec-

tionately, even tenderly, in my face, and then, closed them again.

I knew not what to think ; I could not persuade myself that the few incumbent flowers could have sufficiently impeded her respiration, to have induced a sense of suffocation. Besides, her malady seemed to me to bear more of the character of those physical derangements, which are the consequence of strong mental emotions.

“ In the name of heaven,” I exclaimed, “ I conjure you, *Œnone*, to torture me no longer. Speak to me, I intreat, and tell me what affects, and troubles you, thus fearfully. What is the source of this cruel convulsion of an existence that is so infinitely dearer to me than my own ?”

Again she opened her tearful eyes ; and after a scrutinizing and melancholy gaze on my face, would again as speedily have closed them ; but both by my voice, and the pressing energy of my action, I urged her into speech.

“ You will think me,” she said, feebly and slowly, “ I am sure very, very weak—and yet I am not generally subject to the dominion of these superstitious feelings. Indeed, indeed I know not how to tell you the thoughts that have so utterly disconcerted me. I suppose, and believe, I must attribute them to the consequent re-action of the great excitement of spirit, which I have experienced this morning.”

“ What is it, you would say,” I exclaimed anxiously; “ dear CEnone, you but add to my pain by this evasiveness. Tell me, I beseech you, without disguise, and without delay, all that you have to reveal.”

“ I will,” she slowly replied; “ I must: and yet, the strong sense of my weakness, my utter, idle, reprehensible weakness, inspires me with a reluctance which I can scarcely surmount. Strange that I, who am so little subject to the entertainment of these painful, sorry phantasies, should have thus unreservedly yielded myself to so monstrous a delusion. But, it assailed me

with a force, which it appears to me, no human reason could have resisted—and even now, I sink beneath it.” And she added, with a slight shudder, “Take away those flowers.”

She pointed to some few, which still remained scattered upon her person. I removed them instantly, in strange, and anxious, but silent surprise. After a moment’s pause, she resumed, with however, evident, yet subdued, reluctance,

“Pity, and pardon my idle, culpable infirmity, and I will avow it to you; though I know you would be justified in regarding it with a contemptuous compassion, rather than with either of the feelings which I solicit. But, I repeat to you, that I am not generally superstitious; and yet,” she closed her eyes, while she continued, “it appeared to me, but a moment ago, with a clearness, a force, and a truth, against which all the efforts of my rational faculties afforded no bulwark, that, every flower as you threw it upon me, was suddenly converted into *a clod of clay*. As each alighted on my

breast, I could not believe that I had not sustained a heavy blow; and I felt, irresistibly, mortally, as though *you* were engaged in laying me in a premature, and living grave." And she added, apparently, rather thinking aloud, than addressing me, or any of her auditors, "Surely, surely, this phantasy is ominous of evil?"—

As she uttered these words, the tears burst in renewed streams from her eyes; and she concealed her face beneath her hands, while her whole frame was violently shaken by the agitation of her mind.

I was awfully, indescribably shocked by this singular detail. I *was* superstitious; and the contagion of her melancholy delusion had communicated itself to me in its fullest extent. Yet, I was obliged to affect an utter incredulity; for, I had to fulfil the hard, and double task of not only withstanding my own depression, but, of endeavouring to remove hers. I therefore, affected to smile at her apprehensions, and strove

to sooth, and cheer her into the restoration of her serenity, both by my kindness, and arguments. In this attempt, I was most affectionately aided by my sorrowing, and compassionate sister; and by the poor children, whose smiles had been converted into sympathetic tears by Cœnone's grief. Tenderly they threw their arms around her neck, and, while they themselves sobbed upon her breast, fondly caressed, and most endearingly strove to console her, in such touching phrases, and with such simple reasons, as their youthful, and uncultivated understandings could supply.

But, the mind had been thrown from its equilibrium; the whole system was so completely unstrung, and enervated, that she could not speak without weeping: and, as she sat upon the earth, listening to our intreaties with an infantine submissiveness, and striving to comply with them, the tears literally fell like rain from her eyes. She was in that state of complete dejection, and entire loss of self-control, that soon, discovering that our remonstrances, and

attempted consolations only had the effect of stimulating the indulgence of this singular affection of the spirit, we conducted her to the house, and left her to the solitude of her own apartment. And thus strangely terminated, through a mysterious, and inscrutable impulse of Nature, in sorrow, and in bitterness, a day, during the greater portion of which, I had experienced pre-eminent happiness.

The following morning, she had wholly regained the dominion of her feelings, and was as composed, and sedate, as she generally was ; but, her cheerfulness had not yet returned, for the physical system was still suffering from the exhaustion, and convulsion it had undergone. On the subsequent day, however, every trace of her singular affliction had entirely vanished ; and she was in her happiest and gayest mood.

A week elapsed ; we passed it, in unalloyed pleasure. The terror to which she had been subjected, had apparently been productive of no permanent consequence ; she never made

the slightest recurrence, or allusion to it, and we all scrupulously followed her example.

On the eighth, or ninth morning of our visit, I was sitting alone in her presence; and was abandoning my mind to the consideration of a thousand agreeable anticipations and projects. Even the retrospect of the circumstances of her recent indisposition, was now far from distressing to me; for, the more I revolved it, the more it tended to confirm me in my suspicion, I may almost say, conviction, of her reciprocation of my affection. All the events of the last few weeks served but to corroborate this judgment; it was, it seemed to me, the only, the natural, the inevitable corollary that could be derived from her conduct, notwithstanding her evasion, not her *rejection*, of my avowal of attachment.

Thus, then, I was assured of her love. But how was I to induce her to acknowledge it? Owing to some singular, and unaccountable infatuation, which had obtained supreme dominion of her mind, she had, in this instance, en-

rolled herself in the absurd, but, very numerous, category of those, who never feel what they speak, or speak what they feel. I was, however, resolved that this self-deception should no longer continue. Yet how was I to terminate it ; how persuade, or entrap her into a declaration of her affection ? and I ransacked industriously not only my invention, but my memory, for a discovery of the means. I even thought, among a thousand fanciful projects, of Ovid's relation of the stratagem of Acontius.

While these reflections were passing in my mind, *Œnone* was regarding me poringly, with an expression of vivacity, and animation, which, but that it was tempered by the extreme mildness, and benignity of her nature, might almost have been called, malicious. She was seated before a table, her elbow resting upon it, and her Grecian chin supported by the rosy palm of her snow-white hand ; an arch smile was on her beautiful mouth ; her eyes were glistening, and she was evidently reading my heart, as

though it had been bared to her view. Not a lineament of her intelligent countenance but showed most eloquently, and whimsically, that she could not have been more perfectly cognisant of every thought of mine, had it been formally proclaimed to her. In this deed of moral burglary, she was as utterly lost, as I was, in accumulating the matter for her plunder.

How long she had been thus clandestinely engaged, I know not, when suddenly, and accidentally raising my head, I detected her, in the very intensity of the expression, which I have described. But, a brief moment however, was I allowed to enjoy my discovery; for, speedily she observed the alteration in my countenance, which it had immediately induced. Then, the rapid interchange of a look, displayed to each, our mutual knowledge of the other's thoughts, and occupations; and a smile of amusement grew on my lips, to which hers promptly responded by one of intelligent, and mirthful sympathy.

“ Robber !” I said, “worst of robbers—engaged in the pillage of the *mind*. But, you shall be sternly judged, and adequately punished.”

“ Do not be vindictive,” she replied, in the same tone; “ I plead guilty, though my booty is not a very invaluable one; it is but a sorry corroboration of that, which I previously knew.”

Then, with a pencil I wrote on the margin of a book, the following lines, which I requested her to read aloud.

“ *Juro tibi sanctæ per mystica sacra Dianæ,
Me tibi venturam comitem, sponsamque futuram.*”

“ You are not, aware, I apprehend,” I said, with affected gravity, when she had concluded their perusal, “ of the importance of the mysterious words you have uttered. Do you know that these two lines engraved upon an apple, and thrown into the bosom of his mistress, by an ingenious Grecian youth, obtained for him her hand? You have just sworn most sacredly, by the mysteries of the holy Diana, that you

will marry me ; and I, be assured, shall expect that you will not violate so solemn an oath."

But, the Christian maiden had far less regard for her involuntary promise, than the Pagan nymph ; and my plagiarized stratagem had no share in the good fortune of its original inventor.

" *Œ*none," I said, " your disguise is useless. You know you love me ; then, why have the disingenuousness to seek to conceal that, which, you are well aware, must be ultimately divulged ? Confess it therefore, at once."

" Your modesty is surprising," she calmly replied. " Nevertheless, allow me to ask *you* why, when you know the *maternal* degree of relationship, that exists between us, you will still persist in seeking to establish a tie, which is consequently impracticable. If you continue this fruitless attempt, I warn you, that you will, at last, provoke me, to appoint myself your—*grandam*, your mother's *mother*."

I started at the sound of these words, as

though I had been bitten by a serpent; all my good humour instantly vanished, and my combustible blood was about to take fire: but, by a violent effort, I repressed, or rather contrived to conceal, the anger and vexation which they had excited.

When I retrace the occurrences of this brief period of my life, I scarcely know myself. Though I remember them all, with a surprising distinctness, yet, it is with difficulty, I can fancy that the stern, dark, miserable man who narrates these light incidents, was once the very individual who was the subject of them. That *I* should ever have experienced an emotion of gaiety, that *I* should ever have possessed the faculty of laughter, now seems to me an impossibility, which nothing but a minute, and progressive retrospect of the past, and of the gradual changes in my character, and disposition, can controvert.

Transient however, most transient, was the duration of this enviable period of my exist-

ence. With the anger, which *Œnone*'s self-appropriated designation engendered in me, terminated *for ever*, my entertainment of that emotion of the mind, which produces the material effect that we denominate laughter. Since then, I have experienced a few brief moments of happiness; but, they occurred, as I shall relate, during a period of bodily ailment, which prevented any ebullition of the spirits, however content and satisfied the mind might have been. From that sad hour therefore, the capacity of joy may be said to have formed no longer a portion of my faculties.

I have stated that that very pleasantry of *Œnone*, which, only a few days before, had had the effect of intimidating me into a diversion from my pursuit, now only excited my ireful feelings. But, I was in a predicament somewhat dissimilar to that which I had occupied during the time of its previous occurrence; for, every hour I had grown more sanguine of success; and consequently, in proportion to the

extent, and strength, of my hopes, was the bitterness I incurred in their disappointment. And this is the only just, but unfortunately rarely discernible, criterion by which all pretensions to forbearance, and resignation, should be judged. When we feel little, when we are abundantly rich in insensibility, we are exemplarily tranquil under the imposition of misfortune; and then, some thoughtless few award to us a pre-eminence in the virtue of fortitude, when the vice of callosity has been our real protection from repining, and perhaps, rebellion, against the decrees of Providence. The disappointment of my expectations only engendered my *bitterness*; but, when the destruction of my convictions occurred, I experienced *desperation*; a fiercer pang exciting a fiercer ebullition.

Œnone discovered on my brow the red spot of anger which her speech had excited; and, perceiving that I was both seriously irritated, and distressed, advanced towards me, and kindly taking my hand, said palliatingly, and affectionately,

“ Do not be offended by my levity, I beseech you. Heaven knows, that I little intended to pain you. But I will not again expose myself to the chance of repeating my transgression, by any longer pretending to misunderstand you. I believe that you entertain a sincere regard for me; forgive me, however, if I say that I rather regret its existence. Be assured, that we never could be permanently happy in a union. I speak with reluctance, yet, I feel that it is my duty to express myself with a perfect unreserve. During a few brief years, our attachment *might* be reciprocal; but, you are too young to be aught to me save a friend, and I am too old to ever become your wife. With so great a discrepancy of age, I repeat, no permanency of affection could exist; and, even if I possessed in the fullest extent you can desire, the sentiments you would excite in me, I would rather wilfully perish in the effort to extirpate them, than entail irremediable misfortune upon you. Do not then be angry with me, I implore you; but summon your reason to your aid; and

relinquish a pursuit, which, were I to yield to it, could only ensure the future misery of both of us. Adopt this advice for *my* sake, if not for your own; or you will compel me to leave the home of your father, and the society of your sister and yourself—of those who are, and ever will be, most dear to me, as *friends*."

She expressed herself with so much earnestness, and affection, that I knew not how to doubt the truth of her profession. I was thunderstruck; my blood was stagnated; I was incapable of reply.

At this moment, my sister entered the room with a countenance whereon anxiety was strongly depicted. In her hand she held a letter, which she delivered to me. Almost mechanically I commenced the perusal of it; but, the nature of its contents speedily awakened me to a consciousness of my occupation. It announced in the dryest and most laconic language, the utterly unexpected arrival of my father at our abode; his discontent at our absence, and desire of our immediate return.

Here, was matter to divert my mind from an entire indulgence of the feelings which OEnone had excited, or, at least, to suspend, for a moment, its keenest sense of disappointment and injury. The intimation which the letter conveyed, created in us all, avowed surprise; and very probably, an equal regret, though we forbore to express it, excepting by our looks. However, the mandate we had received, was one against which there was no appeal: and, the few necessary preparations having been completed, and an affectionate farewell been interchanged between ourselves, and the fair Ianthe, her father, and sister, we immediately commenced our return.

But, under what different circumstances, and in what different feelings, from those, of our last, was this journey performed! OEnone was the only person of the party who preserved even the appearance of serenity; and she was assiduous in her kindness, and attention to me, not only in the hope of consoling me for my present disappointment, but evidently, in the

intention of obliterating from my mind, the gloomy impression which the avowal of her unfavourable sentiments had occasioned. But, I was in that state of depression, and moroseness, that all her gentle attempts to enliven, and propitiate, had rather the effect of begetting a spirit of perverseness, and of increasing my inclination to the silent indulgence of my stern, and gloomy reverie. After a short time, therefore, she desisted from her fruitless endeavours to arouse me from this moody taciturnity; and sustained a languid, and desultory conversation with my sister. At last, even this poor mockery of social communion expired; and we performed the remainder of our journey, not only in the character, but in the spirit of a cavalcade of *sincere* mourners: and, under this aspect, and in these feelings, did we return to my native, and paternal abode.

When we encountered my father, as I expected, he made no allusion to our absence; but he was more than ever dry, brief, and

abrupt, in his intercourse with us all, especially with me. He never spoke to me, save when he was compelled by some selfish motive; and even then, he gazed studiously in a contrary direction, as though he sought to show me, with all possible contumely, that he was resolved to devote to a communion with me, not one more of his senses, than his own necessities imperiously required.

At first, we could not discover the cause of his sudden return; but, at last, we accidentally ascertained from a domestic engaged in assisting him in the arrangement of some of his scientific instruments, that a remarkable eclipse of the sun was expected almost immediately to occur; and that he had learned in the metropolis, or by his own astronomical knowledge had acquainted him, that it would appear to the greatest advantage in his own part of the country. In this characteristic object existed, I believe, the sole cause of his abrupt, and most undesired curtailment of the intended period of his absence.

Several days elapsed. With my cousin, my conduct partook of the churlish, and sullen character of my father's to me. She sustained it however, with unaltered amiability ; and made many kind efforts to effect a reconciliation between us. Yet, though I was delighted by the consciousness of the feelings which this pacific course implied her to possess, I was in that strange state of headlong perversity, that I could not compel myself to suffer her to see the satisfaction which it caused me to experience. My love for her was even, if possible, increased by these touching proofs of the imperturbable sweetness, and goodness of her disposition ; yet, such were the unhappy defects of my temper, that I would rather have perished than have confessed, at this period, that I entertained for her a particle of affection. Such, indeed, was the pitiable and scarcely credible extent of my peevish infirmity, that, not only could I never induce myself to speak kindly to the poor fawn, in her presence, but I frequently drove it from

me, with the harshest threats; though, when she was absent, I availed myself of every moment to exhibit to it, in a thousand playful dalliances, all the fondness of an attachment, which was really augmented, by that very necessity of concealment, which my own self-tormenting churlishness occasionally imposed upon me.

Time still proceeded; and my sufferings beneath the moody, sorry course I was pursuing, hourly increased; but, in the same proportion increased the difficulties of terminating them.

Œnone was too good, too morally exalted, to ever descend to the ignominy of entertaining a feeling of rancour, or petulance; but, she possessed a becoming share of necessary pride, and self-respect; and, conscious that she had made every effort to propitiate me, she gradually withdrew from the hopeless and ungrateful task. Not that she manifested either coldness, or reserve; but she no longer sought my society with an equal assiduity, or gave me the frequent opportunities of insensibly returning to a pacific

intercourse, without comment, or explanation, which, at first, she had so repeatedly afforded me. Thus therefore, the likelihood of a speedy reconciliation between us, appeared to be considerably diminished; for, though I could not conquer my weakness, I was yet well aware of its existence; and I felt that many, many a long day might elapse, before I should be able to attain the manly courage to acknowledge my error, and demand forgiveness for its commission. Yet, this now seemed to be the only mode of restoring me and my fair kinswoman, to our past state of familiarity, and friendship.

In these feelings, and in the gloomy prospect of their continuance, my life became wretched. Ceaselessly I revolved in my mind every possible mode, except the right one, *concession*, of terminating an estrangement that was the bane of my existence. I would have given the world to have been able to have suddenly conferred upon her, some overwhelming favor; some benefit so mighty, so irresistible, that it should have com-

elled her, in spite of all her doubts of her reception, to rush into my arms, and to sob her gratitude on my breast. Oh then, how I would have received her! how I would have pressed her to my heart! mingled my tears with hers—humbled myself before her—adored her! worshipped her!

One day, one memorable day, in the fullest indulgence of reflections of this nature, I was returning from a long and solitary excursion in our wild district. I had been minutely reviewing every event connected with **Œ**none, which had occurred since her arrival in our abode. But, the principal subject of my consideration was, the mode of re-establishing our former amity. I could not bend to her; how then, should I contrive to make her bend to me? an event which I no longer desired, as a concession, an idle homage to my miserable vanity, but simply as a means of affecting a reconciliation between us; for *now*, if she would have made but the slightest advance, manifested the least indication of a

wish for the restoration of our friendship I, should have instantly availed myself of it, discarded all my haughty and forbidding reserve; and returned immediately to the cordial manifestation of those affectionate, and passionate, nay, almost *idolatrous*, sentiments, the continued suppression of which had become a burden, and a real torture to me.

While I was striving to imagine by what mean this most desirable object was to be attained, I became conscious that darkness was gradually growing upon the face of the earth. Every moment it became deeper, and deeper; and there was in it, and in that portion of the sky, which I could behold from the deep glen wherein I was buried, a peculiar, and ominous character, that seemed to indicate the approach of some natural convulsion.

Instantly, the wildest thoughts took possession of my mind. The heavy obscurity, and the leading features of the atmospherical phenomena, were not those of an impending thunder-

storm, however violent: but, I could not determine what they portended. Perchance, an earthquake? perhaps, one general eruption of our mineral, and volcanic district? Oh, would that these calamities would occur! was the passionate wish of the inmost recesses of my heart!—What cared I for any evil that might befall the whole earth, provided I could accomplish my dearest desires by preserving the life of ~~One~~none; and thus, obtain through her gratitude, not only the restoration of our former amity, but the possession of her hand: for, how could she refuse aught to him who should have attained the inestimable happiness of rescuing her from an impending, and horrible death?—Oh, how I prayed, in the intense, and loathsome selfishness of my nature, and as devoutly as though I had been instigated by some exemplarily just purpose, that providence would hasten to grant the fulfilment of this diabolical desire!

Darker, and darker grew the heavens; and

each moment, my thoughts became more in unison with their aspect. The birds flew coweringly, and shriekingly, within a few feet of the surface of the earth; the wild animals either retreated slowly, casting around them wistful, and anxious glances, or fled in fleet terror to their lairs; and the owls, and all the other foul revellers of the night emerged from their noisome hiding-places. But my reflections were diverted into another channel, when, on emerging from the defile, and entering upon the open plain, I discovered the cause of this mysterious change in the face of nature. That eclipse of the sun, which my father had foreseen, had occurred. The whole appearance of the dark vault above me, was sublimely solemn, and impressive. The disfigured, yet still mighty, and majestic, luminary looked fierce, and portentous; and there was a depth of silence, and stillness, in the air, that sat like a garment, upon the spirit. Some few lambent, and discolored rays of fitful light still

pervaded the atmosphere; as though just a sufficiency had been permitted to remain, to display in the fullest oppressiveness of its awful gloom, the thick, black, menacing veil, that lay, almost palpably, across the pure, and shrinking empyrean.

Even with that darkness which arises in the regular operations of Nature, there is always united something of the vague, and the apprehensive; it is a mysterious, and solemn, and stern Power, to the influence whereof, few care to resign themselves voluntarily; and rarely does it attain them, in their homes, and on their couches, but, it compels the most vigorous intellects, to acknowledge the enervating influence of its assaults. In his dread of this insidious dominion, by the artifice of his hand, and the ingenuity of his mind, man has learned to protect himself from its approach; for, it is an enemy with which he cannot cope; invincible in its invisibility, and in its qualities of ether, the shrinking, and gross faculties of the merely

material being tremblingly admit that they can neither sustain, nor repel, the attack which they cannot discern.

These, are the effects of the natural, and habitual recurrences of this mighty Power. But, in those irregular, and eccentric extinctions of the great luminary of the earth, on one of which I then gazed, there is an awe, a majesty, a fearful manifestation of the precariousness of our condition, of our utter dependence on the will of a regulating Omnipotence, which is oppressive, annihilating; and tramples, withers us, into an instantaneous conviction of our insect-like insignificance. And yet, with all this sense of worthlessness, and insecurity, there combines an almost equal share of exaltation, and excitement. Such a spectacle presents a stirring reminiscence to the torpid mind, of the unconscious, but iron slavery of habit and inherent prejudice; lifts it, from the material to the subtile, from the earth, and the things that are of it, to the sky: and, freeing it, from its usual

narrow confines, sends it to speculate, for one brief moment, in the vast liberty of the unbounded universe, of that stupendous system of worlds, whereof our own poor ball constitutes comparatively but a scarcely perceptible portion !

Even the very apprehensions, thrilling as they are, which such a sight as this suggests, yet, partake of grandeur, and dignity. Every moment as I gazed, I seemed to anticipate some supernatural result ; some sundering of the celestial vault, and dazzling manifestation of the might, majesty, and glory of its Ruler. And I thought on the magnificent picture of the Psalmist ; “ He bowed the heavens also, and came down : and it was dark under his feet. He rode upon the cherubim, and did fly : he came flying upon the wings of the wind. He made darkness his secret place ; his pavilion round about him : with dark water, and thick clouds to cover him.” So majestic and stupendous is this theme, that it inspired even a silly

and feeble writer to imagine the following noble line; The Lord descended from above,

“ And underneath his feet, he cast the darkness of the sky.”

How infinitely superior is indeed, this power, to that of the most glorious light, in exciting ideas of surpassing grandeur and dignity, and feelings of awe and veneration. The image of an omnipotent Being wrapt “ in *dark* water and thick clouds,” is perhaps, the mightiest that the human mind can entertain.

While these reflections, and a countless number of a similar character, occupied me, the sun had undergone its greatest obscurcation, and the heavens were gradually and slowly becoming brighter.

My meditations however, had not prevented me from pursuing my return to my home; and I had reached the draw-bridge that connected the little island whereon our house stood, with the main land, before I was even conscious that I had been continuing my walk. Over this unsteady, but not apparently insecure support,

I was loiteringly advancing, when I discovered my father seated upon the terrace before the entrance-gate; intently occupied in his astronomical observations, and so situated that I could not obtain ingress without passing close to him. Always entertaining an habitual reluctance to approach him, and never subjecting myself to this infliction but, upon compulsion, I mechanically folded my arms, and resting them upon the iron balusters of the bridge, renewed my observation of the celestial phenomena around me; resolved, though scarcely consciously, to patiently maintain my present situation, until he should have departed from that which he occupied.

Suspended thus, between the dark lake, and the dark heavens, but at very unequal distances, for the bridge rose only a few inches above the surface of the water, again I unreservedly abandoned myself to my reveries. The sun had assumed the form of a fiery crescent of a hue so deep, and red that I could only compare

it to that of blood. In the upper sky, slowly, and majestically sailed a few orange-colored, glowing, and nebulous vapors ; and, in the lower air, lay a thick, black, portentous cloud apparently charged with thunder, which gradually descended, until a portion of it hung like a bird of prey impending over our mansion.

But, my attention was principally directed to the contemplation of the phenomena of the higher regions. A thousand superstitious fancies suddenly arose within me ; and I thought, “ Can my fate be connected with this irregularity of Nature ? Can it be intended to convey to me, the career which I myself shall run ? Over the earth, and the things that are of it, the heavens notoriously exercise an unbounded influence ; even the winds, and the tides are obedient to them. Why then should man, save in the vanity, and fallacy, of his reason, suppose himself independent on so mighty, and general a dominion ?—I entertain no such impious scepticism ; I believe that this striking spectacle is

exhibited to me, as a manifestation of my fortune ; and, if I should be so arrogant, or so blind, as to reject the knowledge it offers me, I contemn the mercy of heaven, and render myself morally responsible for my own probable destruction.”

And I added, aloud,

“ Inscrutable, and mysterious power ! subtle spirit, whose agency I have felt pervading my existence, since the hour I became a sentient being, in you, these thoughts originate : and I will not neglect your instigation. I will accept therefore, as an emblem of my future, the fate of yon bright cloud, which is now so gaily progressing in the direction of the sun. If it pass it, I will believe myself born to prosper ; but, if it encounter extinction in that fierce ocean of fire, I swear to resign myself, without repining, or reproach, to any lot that may be adjudged to me. Yes, on the issue of its course, I voluntarily stake my destiny ; and I bind myself,” and I uttered fervently, the most solemn adju-

rations that mortal can employ, “to accept it, as the arbiter of my fortune, whether for weal or wo, good or evil, here, and hereafter!—Sail then, cautiously, emblem of my fate; for, flimsy as you are, you are freighted with the irrevocable disposition of my future!”

And speedily was that future decided which, in the superstition, and infirmity of my heart, I had solemnly, and prophaneley made dependent upon the course of a vapor. For a few moments, I watched it, with an intense anxiety: at first, it seemed as though it would have escaped the apprehended danger; but, suddenly changing its direction, it arrived within the influence of the sun; and, with a feeling of desperation, which I cannot express, I beheld it rapidly disappear beneath the power of its rays!

At this moment, a soft voice at my side, said, “How intently you are occupied; I have been standing here, for many minutes, yet you will not deign to regard me.”

Full well I knew the tones of that dear, and

gentle voice; yet, even before I could turn to reply to her, even before I could move, scarcely think, a vivid flash of light surrounded me. I seemed to myself to be enveloped in flame; I felt as though my entire being had received a universal blow; the iron balusters upon which I rested, yielded beneath me; and I fell headlong into the water. Instantly, I rose to the surface; I retained my senses, but I found that I had no power of motion. My whole frame could not have been more rigid had it been carved in granite; and though within the distance of only a few inches of the bridge, I possessed not the capability of raising my arm to prevent myself from sinking.

Then, had my destiny terminated; then, had I perished a comparatively innocent man, but for the fatal interposition of my cousin. With a presence of mind, a decision, and a promptitude which I could never have expected to have existed in one so gentle, she sustained me above the surface of the water,

while, with piercing cries, she summoned assistance. Never shall I lose the most vivid recollection of the minutest incidents of that moment! Though I was enduring severe corporeal pain, I retained a perfect possession of all the faculties of my mind; and while a fragment of this wretched frame survives, I shall not forget the pleasure, the thrill of satisfaction, I derived, even in that moment of danger, and of suffering, from the contemplation of *Œnone*. No words can convey the picture which she presented; the very formation of her features seemed to be radically altered, and the whole countenance expressed the intensity of horror, anxiety, sympathy, and energy. Never did human face more completely reveal the affection of the heart! I rejoiced in my peril; and, instead of regretting its occurrence, felt that I could willingly have daily exposed myself to it, for the sake of a far less reward.

When the servants, who had been collected by her cries, had extricated me from the lake,

it was discovered that I was entirely deprived of the use of my limbs ; was as bodily incapable, as a man that has been smitten by paralysis. Little did I think when I casually and carelessly regarded the thunder-cloud, that it was freighted with the lightning which should so speedily avenge my superstitious and impious withdrawal of my destiny from the protection of Providence, to consign it deliberately and irrevocably to the power of Chance !

Undisturbed by, or unheeding the cries of CEnone, my father still pursued his astronomical observations. As the servants bore my helpless body within the distance of a few feet of the spot which he occupied, he deigned not to cast a look upon me ; but, angrily desired my supporters to proceed with greater speed, for “ the tread of so many feet created a tremulousness in the earth, which imparted an oscillation to his telescope.” And this was all the sympathy which a casualty that still might cause a son the loss of his life, extracted

from an affectionate father!—Oh, how my blood boiled, as I heard the unfeeling mandate!

When we arrived in my chamber, it was discovered that the injuries I had sustained had been occasioned by the iron balusters of the bridge having attracted the lightning, and conveyed a portion of it into my arms, the nerves of which it had completely paralyzed. In this violent shock, the whole of my frame had so entirely sympathized, that every portion of it was deranged; and I was stretched on my bed, with little more of the indications of vitality than the power of respiration could supply. I was utterly incapable of all motion; and could not speak in consequence of the torture which even the attempt occasioned me.

In this torpor of the body however, my mind had no share; could its action have been visible to the eye, its ceaseless activity would have formed a striking contrast to the utter lethargy of my grosser faculties. While I lay on my bed, a helpless and rigid statue, my adventurous

thoughts rapidly roved through all the realms of space, and all the divisions of time. In the same moment I arrayed before me, the past, the present, and the future; I saw C^Enone with the look of sorrow which she wore on the day of her first arrival at our abode. I saw her pale, and panic-stricken as she was, when we extricated her from her tomb of flowers; and I saw her, smiling, and happy, a wedded wife, straying hand in hand with me, through the rich scenery of a foreign land. The fetters of my body had quickened my spirit; and, like the saint in the Apocalypse, I seemed to look upon “the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.”

During the whole of the remainder of that day, my sister, and C^Enone continued in my apartment; and I never ceased to recreate myself by gazing upon the latter. Her ever watchful looks of interest and affection were a source of happiness and exultation to me: and every moment, I congratulated myself on the

occurrence of an accident which had not only terminated our alienation, but had evidently engendered in her, at least, the *expression* of a kinder feeling than she had hitherto displayed, although it might have long existed latently. Then, all my fondly cherished suspicions of her sympathy in my passion, were again strengthened almost into conviction. And not in error, was this judgment formed, as the immediately ensuing pages will testify. Yes, *love* me, the fair serpent did!—Yet, heaven knows, that I have no right to attach to her this epithet of reprobation; for though had *she* not existed, *my* ruin might never have occurred, yet the fault was mine alone; and a being more immaculate than she, more devoid of error, and more rich in positive worth, never adorned this imperfect earth.

The poor fawn too, was an attendant in my sick chamber. Oh, how I loved the fond animal! It seemed, and I firmly believe that it was, conscious of my suffering; and it fixed

its beautiful eyes upon me, with an unwavering pertinacity, and a sorrowful gentleness of expression, which could only have arisen in its sympathy, and in an instinctive comprehension of my subjection to some affliction. When my countenance occasionally denoted a peculiarly strong impulse of attachment to it, *Œnone* would arise, and tenderly embrace it; but though it seemed far from insensible to these endearments, it never once averted its looks from me.

On the following day, I was still in a state of bodily incapacity; on the ensuing, however, the power of speech had entirely returned to me. My sister had left the chamber; and *Œnone* alone was sitting by the side of my couch, gazing on me with an expression of angel-like benignity, and goodness. Gladness too, was on her features; it seemed to me that she was conscious of the service she had rendered me, and was triumphing in her recollection of it. I regarded her attentively: my feelings perhaps at that moment, possessed an equal degree of

benevolence, and affection, but they were not wholly unmixed with the leaven of a more earthly love. I suppose that my eyes revealed the tale of my heart; for, almost imperceptibly her glances grew more tender. At last, we interchanged a look, that words cannot depict, and the entire value of which, none but the actors in this mystical communion can perfectly comprehend.

“OEnone,” I said, “you love me.”

She raised her head towards heaven; her countenance flushed deeply; her bosom heaved tumultuously: for a moment, she was evidently agitated by a conflict of the most violent emotions, and she hid her face in her hands. But in another instant, she slowly raised it from its concealment; when, the crimson hue had entirely disappeared, and a marble paleness had assumed its place. The strong energy however, of excited love was on her features, and in her heart, as throwing herself on her knees by the side of my couch, she grasped my hand; and gazing on

my face with an ineffable tenderness, she exclaimed in a voice thrillingly tremulous even more with the fervor, than with the timidity of passion,

“ Dearly—truly—devotedly—eternally !”

The suddenness, and utter unreserve of this long desired, and long expected, yet now most startling confession, rushea upon me in a flood that was irresistible. The strength of my mind succumbed to the weakness of my body ; alternate fits of heat, and cold pervaded my whole frame : and for a brief moment, I became equally incapable of both speech, and motion.

At length, I tremulously grasped the hand of my sweet cousin, and kissed it, as fervently as my suspended vigor would permit. She was singularly pale ; there was something almost spiritual in her appearance. The various mental conflicts she had endured, had subverted the usual expression of her features, and substituted one, which I had never before seen;

accustomed as I was to watch minutely, all the phases of her countenance. She addressed me; and her manner was at once, solemn, and affectionate.

“ Dear —— ” she said, “ I love you; I repeat premeditatedly, the avowal which accident, and circumstance have just elicited from me; henceforth therefore, I could not, if I would, retract it. But now, that it *is* made, my fervent prayer to heaven will ever be, that it may not conduce to the misfortune of either of us. In allowing you to discover the secret of my heart, I have acted contrary to the dictates of my reason; contrary too, to a resolution which I deemed unalterable, and which I had embraced in the apprehensions which I have already divulged to you. Yet, I believe, that, but for the exultation I experienced in having been the happy mean of preserving your precious life, and the increase of tenderness to you, which this consciousness engendered, I should always have had the fortitude to conceal from

you, an affection which *may* not promote the peace of either."

"Dearest CEnone," I said reproachfully, "surely you do not already regret your confession?"—

"Not for my own sake, so help me heaven!" she replied with much energy. "It is for you, and you alone, that, at this instant, I entertain any apprehension. I cannot, I must repeat, forget the disparity of our years; I cannot forget that *I* shall be descending the path of life, while you will be in all the pride, and strength of its zenith. You love me, *now*; but, when I shall have paid that debt to Time, which the despot exacts as the price of existence; when that change which is the dreaded doom of all, who linger during a few brief moments, in this transitory pageant, shall have occurred in the form, and in the features, which at present, gratify your partial eye, what *then*, will be the state of your affections?"

She paused; but speedily added, with great

emotion, in a sudden transport of foreboding despondency,

“Oh God! where would be my mean of self-support, of submission to thy decrees, should I ever live to feel that *he* contemns me!”

“Dear, mistrustful being!” I exclaimed reproachfully, “why thus fruitlessly, groundlessly torment yourself?—Believe me, when I swear—”

“‘No, swear not at all,’ ” she cried, interrupting me with great animation; “‘neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool.’ Perchance, we may all, occasionally, thoughtlessly adopt this culpable practice; but, I avow to you, that I place no additional reliance upon that pledge which the self-apprehensive utterer himself considers intrinsically so weak, that it requires to be sustained by the still more fragile base of a profane appeal.”

I reflected a moment; and then, I replied impressively, but with less energy of manner,

“You wrong me, you wrong me, O none.

I have looked into my own heart, and I affirm to you boldly, that there exists within me the power of loving you as long as my days shall endure. I speak to you, without exaggeration: I utter only my most secret, and unadorned convictions."

I expressed myself deliberately, and calmly, and yet, with fervor; and so evidently, was I only protesting that which I felt, that my own firm reliance in the duration of my attachment, produced a favorable change in her. In an instant, however, it passed away; and her countenance again assumed its melancholy aspect.

"How can I," she said, addressing herself more than me, "repose any trust in his youth? He only avers what he himself believes: but, what security is his present conviction against the occurrence of future change?" She regarded me for a moment, with an air of deep sadness: and then, added tenderly, and with much emotion, "Will you, will you, ever be true to me?"—

My first impulse was, to reply to this ques-

tion, by an indignant reproach for her want of confidence in me; my second, to avouch, in spite of her admonition, the permanency of my feelings, by adjuring the heaven, the earth, and the sea, to witness to my protestations of fidelity. But, I resisted both these temptations to the indulgence of the passionate warmth, which her speech had excited; and confined myself to this plain, and unexaggerated answer,

“None, I will love you as long as I live.”

The simplicity of my reply, the faith and fervor with which it was uttered; and the suppression of the more violent emotions which her mistrust had evidently created in me, all united to produce upon her, the effect which I desired.

“I believe you,” she said, “implicitly believe you; and here, terminates for ever, all expression of my misgivings. Yet, I will do more; I will not only never express them, but will attempt to eradicate them; and trust, and *think*, that I shall succeed. I feel that I cannot, ought

not, to act otherwise: the die is cast, and I should be most ungenerous, and most weak, were I to continue to manifest apprehensions of the course which is inevitable. And now, therefore," she added, with a faint smile, making an evident effort to surmount her depression, and assume a lighter air, "your wicked Latin attempt to inveigle me, may be devoted to some use. Insidious and occult as it is, I think I yet have learning enough to enable me to repeat a portion of it, without error; but, if I fail, you must prompt me. *Juro*, I swear; *me tibi venturam comitem*; I will at once become your companion; *sponsamque futuram*, and your wife, the moment, your father shall have granted us, his sanction. This is my compact, and there, is my hand; I now abandon it to you, as the type of the gift of my heart; some future day, you shall take it, as the pledge of the devotion of myself."

And most faithfully did she adhere to her promise; at least, to every portion of it, of which

the fulfilment depended upon herself. The change that, from this hour, occurred in her intercourse with me, was most remarkable. Instead of avowing, or intimating, that she entertained even the vestige of a doubt, she availed herself of every opportunity of displaying her utter, perfect reliance on me. Instead of any longer withholding, or disguising the extent of her affection; or even of attempting occasionally to shroud herself in the mask of restraint, she appeared to derive a pleasure from revealing to me, with an unvarying unreserve, her most secret thoughts, from abandoning to me the entire ransack of her mind. Zealously, and tenderly, but indirectly, she invited me to follow a similar course; and seemed to feel a pride in intimating her belief that, in such a union as ours, though we possessed *two* beings, we ought to have but *one* heart.

It is almost impossible to express the effect which this conduct produced upon me; it won

me, it fascinated, it enchanted me. I saw only with her eyes; I heard only with her ears. Matter, form, color, aspect, space, all my perceptions of them, were equally subservient to her dominion. Not one of my senses were any longer my own; I only held them as delegates from her, to be withdrawn, or continued, excited, or suppressed, by the slightest manifestation of her will. Never, in a lover's belief, was love more sincere, or more strong than mine. The power of entertaining a misgiving seemed to constitute no portion of my faculties; and I abandoned myself to my idolatry, with an entire confidence. The idea of change either on her part, or on my own, never even entered into my imagination, any more than the possibility of her being really less good, and less perfect than I believed her to be. With the thorough Eastern faith of the blindest, and most zealous enthusiast, I should have been unable to have discerned a flaw in my divinity, even though its existence should have been *proved* to me.

In every action, and in every feature, from the most important, to the most trivial, my mind received its tone from her. She entirely directed me in the choice of the literary subjects of my study; I wholly lost my partiality for the authors she disapproved, and, when incited by her encomium, insensibly became addicted to those whom I had previously disliked. She remodeled my taste for music; attached me, if possible, still more strongly, to the works of ancient art; and stimulated me to, and aided me in, the investigation of the most exalted, and worthy objects of human consideration. We talked of the tides, the air, the earth; the changes of the seasons, the growth of plants; the fossils, the minerals, the stalactites, and the dark secrets of the boundless waters. Together, we studied, and discussed the wonders and the beauties of natural philosophy; and even pierced more than superficially, into the scholastic mysteries of ethicks. Perhaps, however, our principal pleasure was to soar into the sublimities

of religion, and lose ourselves in endless conjectures of the state, constitution, and object of the past, the present, and the fearful hereafter.

And yet unknown to myself, a singular and unfavourable change had occurred in the feelings which I entertained for her. It is true that, at this period, I experienced, if possible, even more than my former affection to her ; and a more than equal admiration of her virtues, and intellectual qualities, and endowments. But, the *awe* which she had once excited in me, was irrevocably gone. I had passed a moral Rubicon ; I was no longer intimidated by the apprehension of her indifference, I was no longer in unconsciousness, and in fear, of the nature of her valuation of me. That powerful dominator, and curb of an irregular, and disordered, and self-unmanageable mind, *suspense*, was withdrawn from me, for ever. I knew that she loved me without bound, or limit. All the ice too, and restraint, of mutual ignorance, were entirely removed ; we were thoroughly, and

reciprocally familiarized ; and the consequence was, that her power over me was far more seeming, than real. I can now, but too clearly perceive, that, at this period, I was all that is tractable, and deferential, simply because we were both, in a certain degree, equally animated by a spirit of concession, and accommodation ; and no point of difference had yet arisen between us, of sufficient importance to induce me to discard the habit of submission, and hostilely assert the selfish freedom of thought, and action, which I really, though latently, and unconsciously, entertained. Had I then possessed only a tithe of the self-knowledge, which I have subsequently acquired, I might probably have averted the danger to which this state of mind was likely to expose me.

Never let the woman who would maintain the dominion of her lover, allow him to be *secure* of the possession of her affection : award him an alternation of kindness, and coldness,

and let him *doubt* through a life of consequent homage, and assiduity.

But, I am now anticipating the progress of events. For many weeks I was stretched upon my couch, in a state of bodily incapacity; and during this period occurred all that intercourse between me and *Œnone*, to which I have alluded. I suffered no pain sufficient to prevent me from enjoying her society; and consequently, though deprived of all the pure pleasures arising in a contact and communion with Nature, and of that bodily robustness and flow of spirit which were promoted by the violent exercises to which I was addicted, yet my life was one of almost unalloyed happiness; so great a gratification did I derive, not only from the converse of *Œnone*, but from the ceaseless, and affectionate attentions which my state afforded her the opportunity of devoting to me.

One day, the little Ianthe, and her father, having heard of my illness, arrived at our

house, for the purpose of visiting me. The former brought with her a large bunch of flowers, the most beautiful posy which the declining season would enable her to form. Who has not experienced the wonderful acuteness which long-continued indisposition imparts to all the faculties, and to none so much as to the sense of smell? Whoever is unacquainted with this change, has certainly and fortunately avoided the pain of the cause, but he has lost a consequent pleasure which is almost divine.

I reveled even in the sight of the flowers; but, there are no words which can express the delight which their scent occasioned me. It inspired me with a sensation which I can only describe as an intellectual drunkenness; a faintness, a sickness, a bewilderment, which instead of partaking of the nature of similar affections of the body, only pervaded my whole being with the feeling that I was *sinking* into heaven.

When I recovered from this entrancing tumult of the senses, the restraint which had been imposed upon Ianthe was removed ; and she was suffered to fly into my arms. Then, was manifested a curious and interesting picture of the jealousy of animals. The fawn had often evinced slight symptoms of dissatisfaction, even when my sister caressed me ; but, they were so little defined, that one rather imagined, than distinguished the cause ; its discontent was evident, yet we could not exactly decide what had occasioned it. In the present case, however, there was no possibility of doubting ; for, whether the animal found itself additionally excited in consequence of these familiarities being indulged by a stranger ; or, whether it conceived that Ianthe's extreme youth, and shortness of stature, reduced her more to a level with its own scale, and removed all necessity for restraint, I cannot determine ; but, I *do* know that it seized her by her garment, and attempted to drag her from the side of the

couch, all the while uttering a cry, which was so strongly indicative of extreme grief, that it was quite touching.

We extricated the timid child from the grasp of its harmless assailant; but the instant that she re-approached me, it again flew to the charge, whining even more piteously than before. Again she was emancipated; when with its wonderful activity, leaping over the entire person of my sister, as she sat on the other side of the couch, the jealous animal alighted close to me. Then, forcibly nestling itself beneath the incumbent clothes, and hiding its face in the garments of my breast, it eagerly and beseechingly attempted by every possible mode, to direct my caresses to itself.

This little dramatic scene was delightful to *Œnone*: and, when Ianthe had departed, she lavished upon her beautiful favorite, a profusion of the most affectionate endearments; so pleased was she that it should have manifested such an extreme attachment to me.

I must not forget to mention one other cir-

cumstance which befell on this day; as it was the only instance which occurred of *Œnone* departing from her self-imposed promise of never recurring to her apprehensions.

I was intently gazing upon her; in one hand, I grasped the flowers; and the other I was lightly passing, and re-passing, over the velvet surface of her face. While engaged in this dalliance, I said;

“ You belong far less to our race, than to the kingdom of Nature. There is nothing on earth to which I can so justly compare you as to a beautiful flower. It is a perfect resemblance of your body, and as perfect a type of the purity of your mind. And yet, I almost wrong you; for, where is the floral leaf that can present ramifications to vie with those of these veins and arteries?—The ‘lilies of the valley are clothed in their glory;’ but, bright and wondrous as they are, this form is of a purer fabric; this face has a softer, more orient integument.”

“ None can deny,” she replied smilingly,

“ that you possess a courtier’s tongue, if not a lover’s heart. And yet,” she added with a sigh, after a momentary pause, “ if I am a flower, it must be admitted that I have attained the very fulness of my bloom. The next stage, therefore, must be one of declension ; and the hour *may* come, when *you* shall deem me less fit to be exhibited in a vase, than registered in a *herbal*.”

To this speech I made no reply ; it was the first, and the last, breach of her promise ; and consequently, though it displeased me, I allowed it to pass without observation.

At length, I completely recovered ; and I was restored to the habits, and the predilections of my youth, and of my strength. Now, however, within my inmost mind, grew an anxiety, which had, for some time, latently existed ; but, as the necessity of ascertaining whether there was any just cause for the entertainment of it, gradually drew more near, my sufferings proportionately increased. Strive as I would, I could not disguise from myself the possibility

of my father refusing his concurrence to my union with my cousin. In vain, I assured myself, and truly, that there was no reasonable obstacle to its fulfilment, that he could find no equitable plea for withholding his sanction. Still I felt most acutely that his prohibition, though not very probable, was yet far from impossible; for, I had always lurking within me, a kind of obscure, and mysterious apprehension of the extent of his perversity, and of the antipathy to me which he appeared lately to have conceived.

Coupled with this gloomy augury, was ever present the corresponding thought, What will C^Enone do, how will she act, if my stern, and arbitrary parent should adopt this tyrannic course? I feared to answer to myself the question; and invariably, when I arrived at this stage of my meditation, I desperately closed my eyes against any further investigation of the probable disposition of my future fate.

Several times, I commenced a conversation with my cousin on this subject; in the endea-

vous to learn the exact nature of the sentiments she would be likely to entertain, in the event of the being who possessed the baneful power of determining a fellow-mortal's destiny, proving inimical to our union. Too speedily, however, I found, that her opinions agreed but little with mine; and that she still maintained an almost unlimited notion of the extent of paternal control. Yet, she had no idea that it was even possible that my father could withhold his sanction; and strenuously reiterated, when I revealed a portion of my ominous fears, her conviction that they would prove to be utterly unfounded.

I could not however, be so easily persuaded into security; a misgiving had radicated itself in my mind, which was not to be extirpated by the most potent efforts of either my hopes, or my reason. Dark, and sinister forebodings became habitual to me; and, like the fatalist, I seemed to feel as though I were under the dominion of some dread and irresistible power.

A weight was upon my spirit; from which I could not extricate it; and misfortune itself could not have subjugated me so much, as did my present apprehensions of its occurrence.

At last, in the hope of mitigating my fears of the result I expected from an application to my father, I resolved to learn unequivocally from CEnone, the course she would adopt, in the event of his refusal of his sanction.

“ You ask me,” she replied, after I had several times urgently addressed this question to her, “ to do that which is most painful to me, because I am aware, that it will be displeasing to you. You know how I love you, how sincerely, how heart-dearly! You may conceive therefore, that I cannot tell you without reluctance, that nothing should ever induce me to unite myself to you, without your father’s concurrence. Were I less mature, perhaps, I might have determined differently; but worlds should not bribe me to give you a wife of my years, unless he most unequivocally consented

to receive me as his daughter. Think you, that I could live and bear from *him*, the imputation of having inveigled his youthful and thoughtless son, into an incongenial, dissentious marriage?—Think you, that aught that is mortal could induce me ever to expose myself to the *chance* of enduring this ignominy? No—no—I hope and believe, that unsupported, my principles, and sense of rectitude, would have sustained me in the adoption of a course which I *know* but too well is the only proper one; combined, however, with my feelings of, I trust, becoming pride, and self-respect, they are invincible, and neither the sophistry, nor the prayers, of the united world could shake them. I express myself with this decision, because I am, I will own, grieved, that you should have deemed me capable of acting a part so ignoble as that which you would assign to me, in the event of his rejection of my qualifications as a wife for his son. Oh, how much you have wronged me! if indeed, you could ever have

really thought that *I* would be, at once, so vain, and so debased, as to esteem myself justified in accepting your hand, when *he* should have pronounced me ineligible. But, pray let us dwell no more upon this painful theme, the discussion of which is, I hope, utterly supererogatory ; for, I cannot think, that my own mother's brother will withhold his sanction to his son's union with his niece, when you please to solicit it."

This positive declaration of her principles, and determination, only produced upon me the effect of augmenting my depression, and gloomy auguries. I could now entertain no hope but in the concurrence of my father: for, from CEnone's manner, even more than from her professions unequivocal as they were, I drew the conviction that she was immutable in her decision; and that, as she had implied, neither *my* sophistry, nor *my* prayers, would ever succeed in bending her to the adoption of a course which she herself felt to be unworthy.

Now therefore, still darker grew the horizon

of my future. Frequently I could not forbear from endeavouring to depict to myself what would be my fate in the event of my father's opposition to our union. These thoughts filled me with horror ; and slowly, and insidiously the demon of malignity crept into the crevices of my mind. I felt suddenly inspired by the darkest impulses ; of the origin of which I was not conscious, but seemed to myself a passive agent in the hands of an external and irresistible power.

At length, resolved to terminate the dreadful, and morally pernicious agony which suspense occasioned me, I debated with my sister, respecting the adoption of the course which would be most likely to ensure success. After a thorough investigation of the subject, I determined, in concurrence with her advice, that *she* should make my petition to my father ; but, that she should delay the communication of it, until she should find him in a mood which she might deem propitious.

Day after day elapsed; my poor Marion could obtain no favorable opportunity of introducing my supplication. My father now never for an instant unbent even to her, from the causticity, and laconism of his manner; and my anxiety, and ominous terrors increased to an extent that was insupportable.

At length, I formally told my sister, that I would sustain my present state no longer; that I was resolved to know the worst; and authorized her to proceed immediately to the stern object of my fears, and learn his decision. The moment she had departed on this mission, I went in quest of *Œnone*, and communicating to her the important step I had taken, awaited with her, in dismay ineffable, the all decisive result. Oh, never, were this feeble frame of mine, to endure for a thousand years, should I forget the agony of those moments of suspense!

They were however, but too soon determined. My sister entered. Her countenance was pale; and denoted both grief, and agitation. I felt

at once, the tale she had to tell me; and my soul sank within me. In that instant, my whole nature was permanently changed; and the bitterness, and the daring, and the recklessness of despair seized on my prostrate mind.

In the midst of all my own suffering, I could still retain a perception of the conduct of C^Enone. She said little; but her varying color revealed the agony she was enduring. At last, making a violent effort to regain her self-control, she asked my speechless, and agitated sister to detail to her the particulars of the interview. The kind girl hesitated for a moment, and then replied,

“I believe, I shall act most wisely in not deceiving you; I cannot but think that there would be both folly and cruelty in raising hopes which must be ultimately crushed, and could only be productive of the effect of prolonging your sufferings, during a few more anxious days. Miserable therefore, most miserable, as is to me, the necessity of afflicting two beings

both of whom, are so incomparably dear to me, I feel myself compelled equally by my reason, and a respect for truth, to comply so far with your request, as to give you an accurate statement of the result of our conversation. It was so brief, that I could repeat to you, every word that fell from him; but, it is only incumbent upon me to acquaint you, that he refused his consent in a manner which convinces me, and I say it with ineffable pain, that he will never be induced to alter his decision. I requested him mildly, yet firmly, to assign me a reason for his antipathy to your marriage, that I might report it to you, as some mitigation of the pang which his decree would inflict; but, he peremptorily refused, and sternly desired me to quit the apartment. Therefore, my dear *Œnone*," added the weeping and affectionate girl, "and my dearest brother, you must at once, and for ever, I fear, abandon all hope of being enabled to induce my father to consent to your union."

I was shocked, stunned, by this intelligence,

I knew not what reply to make ; I felt as though my heart were breaking ; I gazed speechlessly and dully upon *Œnone* and my sister ; and, conscious at last, that my present state was not one in which I could discuss with the slightest hope of advantage, the adoption of any course, I withdrew hastily from the room.

Several days elapsed ; and I continued in an equal state of stupor, and unresolve. *Œnone* too, I could see suffered acutely ; but, as the diamond requires the imperfect light of art to elicit the beauties which are latent during the day, so she, during this her twilight of existence, exhibited a lustre, which those who had only superficially observed her, in her hours of prosperity, could never have supposed her to possess. Hers, was the conduct of an angel ; in the midst of her own deep grief, she seemed to think only of mine ; and preached to me resignation, patience, and submission, with a self-command, a spirit of forgiveness, and a rectitude, that appeared to me even more than mortal.

Like however, the lofty and stately pine that, requiring but another blow of the axe, to sever its last hold on its root, sways to and fro, this way and that, without any certain support, I rocked morally, unsustained by any settled purpose. What course to adopt I knew not; but, I *did* know that obedience to my father's decree, was not in my nature. I listened to the words of CEnone; they fell upon my ear; but they made no impression upon my heart: and while she, angel-like, was inculcating charity and peace, I, demon-like, was brooding over the darkest dreams of strife, and retribution.

I no longer sought her society; the faculty of entertaining happiness had departed from my breast. I could only ruminant upon my wrongs, and devote my mind to the consideration of the mode of either terminating or avenging them. The indecision of my conduct principally arose in the doubt of the party to which I should first address my efforts to induce an abandonment of those intentions which, if maintained, I *felt*

would prove my destruction. Whether, however, my cousin, or my father, was more likely to yield to my persuasions, and intreaties, I could not determine : in my inmost heart, I had little hope of the concession of either.

And this, was the fatal apprehension that filled me with every evil thought. Nevertheless, my selfishness protected me from a knowledge, or even a suspicion of my own iniquity. I regarded myself only as a man grievously, incomparably wronged. I vividly depicted to myself the happiness, the career of bliss, I should have possessed, but for the obstacles wantonly interposed by others ; and then, turning to the future of darkness that was now before me, I cursed them as my oppressors, and myself, as their victim.

And yet, though I did not deem myself guilty in entertaining them, I could not but be conscious that a vast change had occurred in the nature of my thoughts. I felt myself perpetually engaged in the meditation of evil ; I

felt that strife was now the sole occupant of a heart, that had so long been the abode of comparative tranquillity, and virtue. Still, this consciousness of the vice of my mind, instead of stimulating me to attempt the correction of it, only inspired me with additional sentiments of hostility to those, who had occasioned the self-tormenting alteration. For, I scarcely need repeat, that I was one of those unfortunates, who being endowed with a strong and quick perception of the faults of others, have yet, neither eye, nor sense, by which they can accurately detect the existence of their own.

In brief, although blind to my own state, and condition, I was nevertheless, *a bad man*. Why God creates such beings, human reason can no more explain, than why a mother occasionally produces a sightless, or a speechless babe. My mind was naturally as defective as is the infant's frame when thus bereaved; and occasionally, I was not more devoid of the power of withstanding its impulses, than the child would be of

supplying itself with an eye, or a tongue. Yet, the thoughtless many will not receive this creed, simply because *my* malady is not palpable to their bodily vision.

A *diseased mind*; we think of, and even look upon it, without emotion; while the sight of a diseased organ, or even a waxen representation of it, fills us with horror, and disgust. Such is the crude quality of the human intellect, that, of the immaterial and the subtile, the all-pervading, but the invisible, it possesses no adequate power of estimation. But, could the diseased mind be incarnated, invested with an appropriate hue, and form!—How many a phlegmatic old crone would be scared into sudden activity by the countenance of her most familiar gossip! how many a fair young form would assume the aspect of the fiend!

It must not however, be supposed that, because I have represented myself as regarding **Œ**none as one of my oppressors, I always entertained towards her sentiments of anger.

Instead of habitually possessing any such feeling, I loved her with an idolatry that was, if possible, increased, and increasing; otherwise, where would have been the source of the pangs I was enduring. Had my affection for her abated, I could not have been maddened by the mere fear of her loss. It was my father, who was the principal, indeed the sole, object of my wrath; until, feeling the almost certain impossibility of ever being enabled to persuade him into a retraction of his prohibition, my mind naturally addressed itself to her, and to the happiness which would still be my lot, if, like me, she would laugh at, and defy his authority. Then only, when I had despairingly examined my chance of influencing her into a departure from her principles, a sentiment of anger to her, took possession of my mind. I could not refrain from repeatedly reflecting that, by the sacrifice of a mere chimera, a fanciful feeling of morbidly sensitive honor, she could ensure my eternal happiness; and

these, and corresponding opinions, I pertinaciously revolved, until I had wrought myself into a violent, but transient fit of indignation against her. Before however, the following morning, it had totally disappeared; and my father again became the sole object of my hostility; when my mind underwent a rotation of feeling almost precisely similar to that of the previous day.

Thus passed a brief period; during which, the only self-knowledge I attained was, that, happen what might, oppose all who would and could, within me, existed not the power of resigning *Œnone*. She was mine, by her own avowal; she had abandoned her heart to me; and the united world should not compel me to relinquish her gift.

While these, and thoughts of equal disquietude, possessed the dominion of my mind, I used to wander about the house, under the curse of ceaseless restlessness. Yet, there was one spot which possessed a strange and mys-

terious charm for me; a charm which, alas, my subsequent experience has enabled me but too well to comprehend. At the time of its existence however, its nature was an enigma to me; I felt its impulse, and I obeyed it; but, I dreamt not of examining the cause. Perhaps, though unconsciously, *I dared not.*

The spot that thus attracted me, was a small chamber which contained a portion of my father's collection of ancient, and foreign arms. Among these, might be seen almost every variety of the means which the ingenious malignity of man has contrived for the increased curtailment of this already sufficiently brief existence. Here, the most fastidious might please himself in the fashion of the aperture which should admit the passage of the icy hand that having once seized, never resigns its prey: convex, concave, oblong, round, or square, the discontented with Memory, might carve an entrance for Oblivion, in any form his phantasy might affect.

To this room, I loved to resort ; for, though I knew not why, I derived a strange satisfaction from the contemplation of the weapons it contained. Before me, they glittered in almost boundless dissimilitude ; falchions, daggers, scimitars, axes, lances, maces ; not one species was omitted of the arms of offence, of either the East, or the West, in both the ancient and feudal times. The greater number of them too, were in an admirable state of preservation ; and, in whatever portion of the chamber I stationed myself, the rays of light and life, were returned to me gaily, gaudily, dancingly by the implements of Death. It was indeed, a strange, and perhaps, unequalled collection ; and could not have failed to have strikingly impressed the philosophical observer, with a gloomy and painful consciousness of the vast extent, and prevalence of the sanguinary features of the human character.

Among this large assemblage of destructive instruments, two especially excited my atten-

tion. The one, was a dagger, about eighteen inches in length, of a serpentine form, resembling that, which the angel Gabriel is supposed to hold before the gates of Paradise. This dagger was believed to have belonged to one of the *Old Men of the Mountain*; by which name were distinguished the Chiefs of the Assassiniens, or Arsacidæ, a colony of murderers that inhabited a few towns in the vicinity of the ancient Tyre. A more perilous weapon could never have been shaped.

The other object of my admiration was also, I imagine, of Oriental origin. It was an axe of a singular keenness of edge. One of its blades was falcated; the converse blade which sprang out of the back of the handle, was almost pyramidal; and was so sharp, and dazzlingly bright, was so evidently formed for massacre, it seemed to my disordered imagination, almost capable of spontaneously burying itself in the skull of an opponent. A more formidable instrument of destruction cannot

even be conceived; and while I brandished it menacingly in the air, I felt as though the lives of the whole of mankind were dependent on my mercy.

As I have said, I knew not why, but I derived a strange pleasure from the inspection, and touch of these barbarous weapons. I especially remember the feelings which they engendered on one particular morning: I was handling the Assassinien dagger; I was considering it in all points of view; and, as I lightly drew my finger over its biting edge, I thought that *if* a man possessed a mortal foe, he might be tempted to regard it as his surest friend. And then, I could not refrain from depicting to myself, the savage, the intense, exultation which he, who had been irremediably wronged, would experience in driving such a weapon as this, into the heart of his oppressor. And, as the picture vividly presented itself to my excited imagination, I raised my arm to its fullest extent in the air; and then quickly and violently lowered it, in the mimic action of a

resentful man stabbing his most detested adversary.

At this moment, I discerned CEnone, standing on the threshold of the chamber; but, I was too much irritated both by a sullen and ever present sense of my wrongs, and by the delusion of my fictitious deed of retribution, to feel the shame which her detection of me in the indulgence of such a puerile ebullition of fruitless malignity, might, at another period, have occasioned. I suppose the scowl, which the rancour, and wrath of my heart had begotten, still remained upon my brow; for, she advanced into the interior of the apartment, and said;

“ In the name of heaven, deform not your countenance by that dire and loathsome expression. If you love me, banish it for ever; or you will render me afraid to approach you. It imparts to you a resemblance to that horrible object of your admiration, the fearful Medusa, which, I confess, *grieves*, even more than it terrifies me.”

“ And think you,” I replied, “ this resemblance occasions me any regret? Mistaking Cænone!—Believe me, I glory in it!—And let my oppressors beware, or by the God of heaven, they shall find that *my actions* can be in perfect unison with the expression of that fell countenance, even though it were a hundredfold more atrocious!”—

“ Oh, address not this language to me, I implore you!” she replied with much animation. “ What have I done? How have I deserved it? Repeat to me, my aggression.—Ingrate! ask your own heart, whether my sole offence has not been the entertainment of a too passionate love for you!”

“ *Impassioned* indeed!” I scornfully rejoined; “ abuse not, dishonor not the term by applying it to the timid, apathetic, selfish course you have adopted. Where is the passion in sacrificing me to the dainty principles of an ideal duty? Where is the passion in destroying my peace, to pander slavishly,

abjectly to the imperiousness of a stern, unnatural, and unjust father?—Deceive not yourself; the contest is between your *supposed* love of me, and those *real* prejudices, which *you* denominate principles. You have placed these two antagonists in a scale; and your presence here, at this moment, too emphatically expresses which has preponderated. You have wealth; I have none: you are independent on all the world; *I* am dependent upon you, and on my father. Then, if *I*, for your sake, and in the strength of a perfect love, deem existence on your support, no degradation to me, by what right do *you* pretend to cancel our bond of affection—*you*, in whom exclusively resides the power of fulfilling it?—We have interchanged our faith; *I* am yours; *you* are mine; and only the united will of both, can mar the compact, which neither could alone have made. I tell you, this moment is pregnant with the decision of our eternal fate; and now, therefore, I solemnly claim *you*, as my

possession ; and *demand* you to fly with me, from this accursed spot, to one, where no imperious parent can arise to oppose the celebration of our union."

"Heaven knows my heart!" she exclaimed fervently ; "heaven knows my love for you!—how willingly I would reply to you, in the beautiful words of the gentle Ruth ; 'Whither thou goest, I will go ; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge : thy people shall be my people, and thy God, my God.'—Oh, that I could return to you this answer ! But, the power has perished, though the wish, alas for *my* peace, exists in even an augmented strength. My pledge to you was wholly conditional ; it depended upon the ratification of your father, and by his disapprobation, is consequently annulled. My principles, against which you also unjustly rail, were instilled into me, in my earliest youth, by a virtuous parent ; and they have grown with my growth, until they have become 'bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh.' I cannot contend

against them, even if I would ; they are part, and parcel of my being ; and you, in your inmost heart, must accurately estimate the extent of their influence, by their predominance of that affection, the real strength of which, you perhaps best understand, when you most strenuously pretend to disbelieve it. But, in the name of heaven, let us not waste these precious moments in fruitless controversy. I have come hither, to tell you, that we are about to part—speedily—and perhaps—*for ever.*”

As she uttered these last words, her voice was broken by emotion ; the tears gushed impetuously into her eyes ; and she concealed her face in her hands.

But, on my feelings their effect was far more violent ; as the intelligence rushed upon them, with all the additional anguish of an entire surprise : a surprise so utter, that, for the first time in my life, I should perchance, almost have doubted the truth of her speech, had not her grief, and the agonized expression of her fea-

tures, afforded indisputable proof of its veracity. The instant wherein I felt this conviction, a change occurred in my whole moral being: all the rancour, and hostility, which I had recently been enduring, vanished; and the tenderness, and the fondness, and the gentle, almost holy affection, that I had previously entertained for her, returned with even an augmented strength. In that moment of trial, I possessed for her a love undebased by any alloy: and, passing my arm around her fragile waist, in the deep, and all-absorbing pathos of my heart, without one trace of a less spiritual passion, kissed, unimpeded by her, the glistening tears from her pale cheeks, as they trickled down them, in the endless succession, which my sudden, and unbounded sympathy excited.

At last, she gently extricated herself from my grasp; and, with a powerful effort, recovered her self-possession.

“ Dearest *Œnone!*” I cried, “ explain to me, I beseech you, the meaning of this intelli-

gence; and when, and why, our separation is to occur?"

"*Why*," she replied calmly, but in a tone of the deepest dejection, "I have already intimated to you; every line of my previous speech must have implied it. But, *when*—alas, in the affection, and weakness of my heart, I have postponed, until almost the twelfth hour, to communicate to you, this painful determination. *To-morrow*, is the day of my departure."

"*Œ*none!" I exclaimed; and my breath failed me; and I staggered beneath the suddenness of this agonizingly unexpected avowal.

"Yes," she rejoined, as though expostulating with herself, more than addressing me, "yes, to-morrow, I must reluctantly quit, and perchance, for ever, this scene of the happiest moments of my life, the friend I love, and *him* who adores me; *him*, whom rather than *wilfully* pain, I would cheerfully lay down my life. But, could I avoid the adoption of this measure? Could I, and still retain a claim to the

minutest portion of female delicacy, continue an inmate of the abode, the ruler of which, my own mother's brother, had refused his sanction to my union with his son ; knowing too, as he did, that his permission was solicited with my privity, and concurrence. “No,” she added, after a slight pause, turning towards, and now, unequivocally addressing me, “no, I could not thus sin against the propriety of my sex, and nature. I have consequently, formally communicated to my stern kinsman, this very morning, my intention of separating from him ; he has acceded to it, with a manifestation rather of satisfaction, than of reluctance ; and to-morrow, I shall quit this abode,—*for ever!*”

“You will, *Œnone!*” I cried frantically.

“I *must* ;” she replied sorrowfully, but, with a fearfully convincing firmness of tone and manner.

“Oh God !” I exclaimed bitterly, the execrable selfishness of my nature again arising rebelliously within me, “then, what is to be *my*

fate?—Where am I to turn? where hide myself—how live—breathe, OEnone, when you are gone!—You know not the danger to which you are exposing me—you know not the madness, which *I* feel I may endure—you know not the deeds which I am capable of perpetrating, if you drive me to desperation, by desertion.—OEnone! OEnone!—I call upon you, to save me, from myself! In your hand, is my fate; you can determine it, as you will: you can award me, happiness, or—*despair*! Blind not yourself to the fact—strive not to disguise it—whatever the results of your decree, *you* will be accountable for them: and a heavy, and a grave responsibility, it may prove, if you decide unjustly! *You* cannot see the dark secrets of my heart—even from my own knowledge, I doubt not many of them are hidden—but, believe me, I speak with the tongue of a prophet, when I say, that, if you discard my prayer, desolation, —havock, —ruin,—may reach to the hearths of all our race. Ponder, I implore you, upon this

avowal—consider it with every faculty of your being. As long as I can, I will cling to life; but, mark me, if driven to despair, if compelled to experience that I possess not the strength to sustain my affliction, *I will* not perish, by inch-meal, *alone!*—*I will*, is an expression which I do not often employ—it is one, which I have never before addressed to you; but, I now feel that there is something almost godlike in the phrase, which only an immortal recklessness can both use, and *realize*. Hear it then, again, from my lips; and respect it: I *WILL* not rot silently, passively, solitarily! Even in my earliest years, the story of the Jewish warrior snared by the Philistines, and immolating himself for the sake of destroying his enemies, created an indelible impression upon my mind. Him, have I always presented to myself as an example; and him, will I imitate if ever I am brought to bay. That destruction which is the work of another's hands, shall never light upon me, *alone*; for think not, I will leave my enemy behind me. No, when I see that, escape is

unattainable, or undesirable, I *will* grapple him by the throat, and, in *his* company, leap cheerfully even into the abyss of eternal perdition!—See therefore—mark—and maturely consider what your rejection of my prayer will bring on me—on you—on *all*."

My passions were aroused; and I expressed myself with almost a maniacal vehemence. CEnone's cheek was blanched; and yet, she seemed nearly as much astonished as intimidated by this avowal of the most sanguinary sentiments from one, whom she had hitherto found so comparatively docile, and amenable to her. There was too, a glance of sympathizing pity in her eye, as though she thought my griefs had excited me into a temporary frenzy. At the moment, however, of my observation of her countenance, I gave a different, and an erroneous interpretation to this expression; which I fancied denoted the deep impression, my arguments and prayers had created on her mind. In this opinion, I added corroborantly,

“ I have said enough, I feel convinced, to

secure your compliance with my intreaty; and I will now therefore, leave you to ponder upon it. Examine, consider maturely the pleas I have urged, and the terrible, but too faithful picture which I have presented to you, of the consequences of a refusal; and tell me, to-morrow, that you are prepared to laugh with me, at the impotent prohibition of a domestic tyrant. Fare you well; may *you* not endure the night of agony, which will be *my* doom. To-morrow, then, we meet again in this chamber?"

She made a faint motion of concurrence; and I left her presence.

But, too literally fulfilled was my prophecy of the interval of torture I was fated to undergo. Words cannot express the horrors of those lingering hours of thickest darkness. I was oppressed by every feeling, that can at once both excite and enervate the human mind. I seemed to be conscious that the catastrophe of my life was approaching; and yet, had to sustain the additional agony of knowing that I was but a

spectator of those who played the game, and possessed not the power of even influencing a single move. Perhaps, to a proud, rebellious, unyielding man, there is no sensation more pitifully painful than that of his complete dependence on the caprice, or even the justice, of another. Through every loitering minute in that endless night, I felt, with an ineffable poignancy, that, on the following morning, my fate was to be eternally determined, was to be meted to me, in endless desolation, or in unalloyed happiness ; that, on one solitary, perhaps, thoughtless instant of decision, solely depended whether the remainder of my days were to be passed in peace or in strife, in bitterness or in charity ; yet, was I utterly incapable of even tempering the decree, which was to effect this despotic disposal of a human life. Such was the galling thought that wrought my complicated sufferings to, perhaps, the topmost pitch of mortal endurance.

That following day at length arrived ; and **Œ**none and I again stood face to face, in the

armoury of my father. She was equipped for a journey; the fawn was by her side; and the carriage which was to convey her from our abode awaited her in the court-yard. I gazed upon her with consternation, and my hopes sank; but, my fury rose within me.

“What!” I cried, “then, you intend not to listen to my prayer?”

“If you mean,” she replied, mildly and sorrowfully, “that I do not purpose to unite myself to you, clandestinely, and in defiance of my kinsman’s prohibition, you are right in your conjecture. Pity me, I implore you; rather teach me to resist, than sue me to succumb; for I must not, dare not, adopt the course which I *know* to be unworthy; which I know to be founded on a base, opposed to the laws both of nature and of man. I have preached to you, in happier hours, the extent of paternal authority; the necessity of conceding to it, even when unjustly exerted; and the greatness of the crime of filial disobedience. Then, think you that I could

be so degraded, think you that I could consent to proclaim myself so very a hypocrite, as ever to sanction an act in exact violation of my own precept? But, let us not, I entreat you, thus imbitter the moments of separation: remember, that, in a few brief minutes, we shall be sundered, and for ever!"

When I first entered the room, I had been rendered, I may say literally, partially insane, by the agitation I had been experiencing during the night; and consequently, the confirmation of my most painful apprehensions which her speech contained, almost succeeded in exciting me into a paroxysm of madness. Nevertheless, with a violent effort, I suddenly checked myself, and replied:

"There is yet one hope; go yourself to the unrelenting despot, and remember that this is no period for the indulgence of feelings of either pride or fastidious delicacy. Go to him, then, and detail to him forcibly, ingenuously, our mutual love; expose to him your heart, and my

own, without reserve; and learn whether your beauty and your virtues cannot soften even his callosity."

I ceased: she paused for a moment, and appeared to be considering my proposal. She then rejoined;

"In the plan you advise, I see no moral harm; it is merely repugnant to my own sentiments of feminine pride and delicacy; but, as you say, this is no period for their indulgence, and you have a right to demand from *me*, the sacrifice of all simply selfish impulses, however cherished. I will therefore do your bidding; and may the Almighty grant that I shall succeed!"

With an exquisitely pathetic look of mingled tenderness, and meekness, she left the room; and I remained pacing it, in a state of mind which I will not even attempt to describe: I shall soon, have to narrate actions which will but too accurately express it. For a few moments, I endeavoured to address my attention to the poor fawn, who by its whining, and

by its beseeching looks, seemed to be desirous to display its consciousness of the distress of those it loved. Yet, in vain I strove; I could not for one brief instant extricate a single thought from the vortex of the hell that was within me.

In a few minutes, *Œnone* returned; and her pale, and dejected countenance but too clearly told the failure of her mission.

“ I have not succeeded,” she said sorrowfully; “ I humiliated myself before him; I despoiled myself of all my pride, and all my reserve; and I laid them at his feet: but, the old man would not be mollified. I must confess he even seemed to derive a pleasure from the too visible mortification which he caused me; and, in spite of all my prayers, and firm but respectful expostulations, he would not consent to assign a reason for his prohibition. Perhaps, he spared me in a feeling of delicacy; yet, would I fain have learned the motive; still, I am most willing to believe that it is one founded in justice. Nevertheless,

whatever may be the cause, I am certain that his determination is immutable."

" And *you!*" I frantically exclaimed in a sudden and irrepressible transport of blended grief, and wrath; " what is now, *your* decree ! Am I still to expect at your hands, an equal measure of atrocious, fiend-like severity ?"

" I have told you," she replied, quickly, and resolutely; " I have told you again and again, with sorrow, and with pain, that I cannot depart from the course which I know I ought to pursue. For *your* sake, I will not; were I to comply with your intreaties, were I to follow the impulses of my heart, and yield to my own selfish desires, my future life would be but one long career of regret, and contrition. I never should be able to forget that for my own guilty indulgence, I had violated one of the most sacred of moral duties; and I should be ceaselessly apprehending that heaven would ordain that I should receive at your hands, the retribution which my crime deserved. All the joys, which

under auspicious circumstances, must have been attendant on our wedded state, would disappear, blighted even in their very bud; and our precious hearth would become but the arena of domestic dissension. Consequently, I repeat, for your sake alone, were I not instigated by an even graver motive, I would withstand both your intreaty, and the selfish impulses of my own heart. The last die is therefore thrown; and we must separate."

She advanced towards the door; then, turning to me, and raising her clasped hands in the attitude of prayer, she added emphatically, while her eyes overflowed with tears, and her voice was broken by emotion,

" May the great God of heaven bless you for ever, and ever! and that he may deign in his goodness and in his mercy, to confirm the benediction I have invoked, will be the ceaseless supplication of one who can never forget the love she has borne you! And now, a long, a last, farewell!"

“ Stay ! stay !” I vehemently, almost imperiously exclaimed, as I intercepted her passage, while the fierce ebullition within me, rendered almost alike imperfect, the faculties of speech, and thought: “ stay ! for there is yet a hope ; a feeble one, I fear, but still, I will prove it. I myself will go to the tyrant, and first sue, and then, demand, his permission. Rest you here, until I return.”

The passions of that moment must have been but too legibly written on my brow ; for, as I closed the door, I heard her anxiously exclaim,

“ In the name of heaven, I conjure you, approach not your father in your present state of excitement !”

However, I hesitated not ; her intreaty rather accelerated my advance ; for, I hoped that even if I should fail to persuade, I might intimidate, him into a concurrence. These were the perilous feelings in which I sought an interview with my obdurate, and equally intrepid parent.

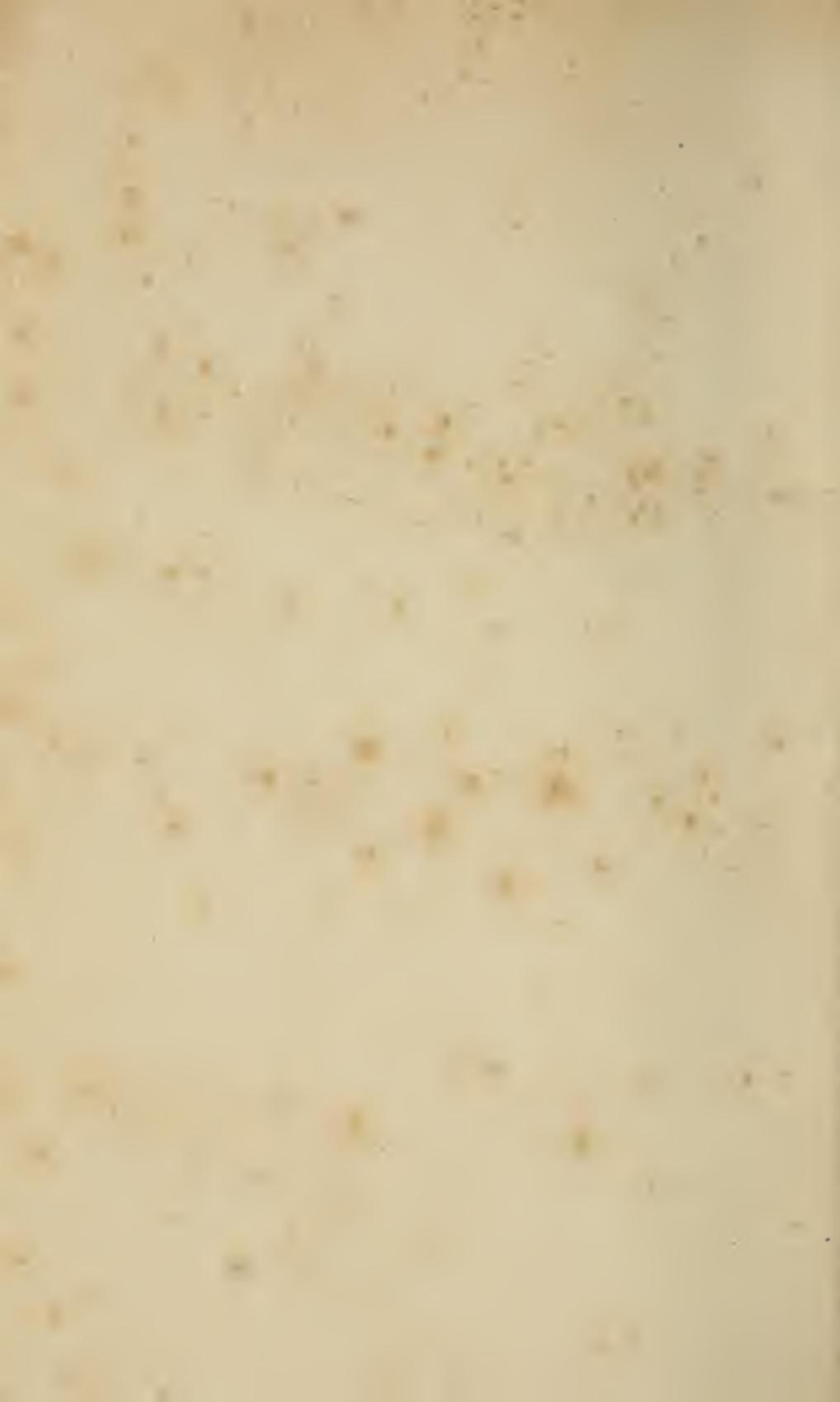
But, in that instant, the thought suddenly

occurring to me that she might avail herself of my absence to effect her escape, I returned, and fastened the door. Then I retraced my steps; and momentarily became more resolved to achieve my purpose at any sacrifice.

END OF VOL. I.

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